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ASCENSION DAY
SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY

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SERMONS, OUTLINES AND ILLUSTRATIONS
FOR SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS

Second Sunday after Easter

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	1 S. PETER II. 19-25.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN X. 11-16.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	NUM. XX. 1-14.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	NUM. XX. 14. TO XXI. 10, OR NUM. XXI. 10—END.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Supernatural Life.

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.
S. JOHN X. 10.

WE were considering lately the wonderful gift of life, with all the deepening responsibilities which Eastertime seems to add to it. We can see with a very little thought what a blessing, what a privilege, it is to live at all, just to be one link in that chain of existence which God is ever weaving into the secrets of His providence. Just as you might see in some factory of carpets the coloured threads darting in, only to be lost, as you think, in the intricacies of the swift machinery, but no, they reappear, just a tuft here or a shade there as the pattern slowly unrolls itself at your feet, so nations, individual lives, great and small, appear, disappear, reappear, in the marvellous working out of God's will. It is a wonderful thing to live; even to have opened one's eyes on the order and beauty of the world with its marvellous history and glorious possibilities is to have merited our blessed Lord's burst of approving wonder: 'Blessed are

the eyes which see the things that ye see.' Simply to live is a privilege for which we ought daily to thank Almighty God.

And yet, what is that cry which is going up from the world, a dull inarticulate wailing of aimless effort, the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together?—the green grass as it waves its fresh beauty in the air dowered with life, yet knows the scorching sun, the withering blight, the day's existence, and the morrow's oven. The sparrow which waits upon God, the fowls of the air, the beadsmen of His royal bounty, they, too, know the glaring heat, they fall to the ground, they know pain and death. Yes, man himself, with his grand history and great possibilities, he, too, displays an undertone of sorrow which too often is the expression most vividly stamped on his existence. The prevalence of suicide is more than a mere passing phenomenon: it means that men find life unbearable, that they prefer to cast back their very existence into the face of Him who gave it rather than meet the duties and the sorrows which lie before them. It is the echo of the wail of Greek tragedy: 'Not to be born is the best thing that can happen to a man, or, failing that, to go as quickly as possible back from whence it came.' Life alone, life unilluminated, unrelieved, unspiritualised, it may be a doubtful blessing after all. And so it was just when men had found this out most bitterly and most keenly, when emperors were offering a reward to any one who would invent a new pleasure, when Stoics were asserting that death was the only way of escape from the misery of life; it was then that a new revelation burst upon the world from the manger of Bethlehem. God came to make life a richer blessing, a truer happiness, to make life, which alone could be called life, possible. He came in His incarnation with that proclamation to which the suffering world eagerly clings: 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' Man might claim something more than a mere share in the struggle for existence, something more than a mere contribution to the winding up of the ages: he could claim life in its highest form, supernatural life, by the power and presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The supernatural life, what is this? A life which is above nature, above its aches and pains, its failures, its disappointments, its sins, above death itself; 'I am come that they might have life.' What is it?

I. First of all, it was something to know that such a life could be lived upon this earth. It is one of the many things for which we have to thank the sender of the message, the God of divine revelation, that He sent us first a message from on high, and then, when that grew dim, an instructor in the truth of that message—not only

the principle of the higher life, but an example how to live it. It is hinted now, you know, with some persistence, that there has been no direct message from the other world, that a special revelation is only a profound insight, an inspired vision of truth, so deep and so living as to make it a reality like that of the outward world. If so, if the conception of deity itself is only a good guess, starting from the material manifestations of fire and water and the other phenomena of the universe, through the realms of mythology, to a conception of a great spirit behind—if, after all, we have only to deal with unverified speculations, if natural religion has never been corrected by revealed religion, it is possible then, after all, that we may be deceived as to a supernatural life altogether. But Jesus Christ made no secret of His claims at all events: 'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world'; 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father'; 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' He claimed to give us a message from the other world, and to exhibit a higher life in accordance with that message, in close contact with the vision of God, whose nature is known and not merely an abstract monarch.

It may be the sign of an unprejudiced mind, not suspected of religious bias, to grope the way through the fog on the pathless waste, without being prejudiced by a guide, or warped by a chart, or tied down to the roads of government survey; but when the day is short, and precipices are all around us, and the storm is gathering, these guides are welcome things to check our bewilderment. So perhaps, if we believe at all in the Easter mystery, we may be pardoned for being prejudiced in favour of a revelation of life, a revelation which lifts it up out of its low groove and blind mistakes, which shows us how self-pleasing, and self-satisfaction, and the ordinary methods of enjoyment were all so many false tracks, that the stony path is generally the right one, and the easy path generally wrong, that most of the tracks which we should have followed are those which would lead us most astray, which are most mistaken and most untrustworthy—that revelation which blessed poverty and praised affliction, and elevated purity, and dignified meekness, and advocated peace, and welcomed persecution, and encouraged mercy, and urged a personal righteousness with the keenness of hunger and the eagerness of thirst. Certainly no ideal of this kind has been evolved before or since, and it requires the sanction of a revelation before we attempt to follow it, before we attempt to reach its dazzling heights.

And yet is it not a distinct help in the face of some severe trial, when the hunger of temptation almost forces the yielding to unhallowed means to gratify its cravings, when the mountain view is spread out before us in its dazzling suggestiveness, when we see our-

selves falling from pinnacles in ecstasy, supported by angels, then to be able to say: 'What would Christ have done? There lived a Man who was superior to all this, on whom temptation fell with all the bluntness of an outward suggestion, unappreciated, unwelcomed, in whom the life, because it was supernatural, left no vacant space for the adverse occupancy of even an unhallowed thought—what would Christ have done?' It is in itself an inspiration.

Or again, when the cross is lifted up, on which our writhing limbs are stretched out, and we shrink in pain or anger, what a strength it is to remember the consecration of pain on Good Friday, which turned the punishment of suffering into a cross of expiation. Here again to ask, 'What would Jesus Christ have done?' is in itself an elevation of suffering.

Or again, when the lower tone of a careless world has obliterated the sharp edges of a distinctive Christian morality, when we are tempted to question the necessity of its strictness, or the beauty of its precepts, what a strength lingers on in that example, 'What would Jesus Christ have done?' It is as if for the first time we had heard the true grandeur and sweetness of some magnificent musical instrument. For years only parts of it had been used, and parts were out of tune, and parts were not understood, and the whole was discordant; when one came, who evoked sounds from it such as never had been heard before, when fresh capacities, fresh combinations, fresh intricacies of interlacing beauty, poured forth. At least we may ask this, 'Has anybody before or since ever brought more beauties out of human nature than Jesus Christ?' 'Which of you convinceth Me of sin?' Think of this alone—not a tuneless jar, not a whisper of a discord. 'Never man spake like this Man.' Are there not capabilities pouring forth, at His touch, for human nature which men never dreamed of; love of enemies—not as an isolated instance, but as an animating principle—the fruit of the Spirit where each grape as we gather it seems to us to come off what we thought to be the thorns of humanity. We owe simply to the revelation of a life like this—to Jesus Christ as the Teacher of life, even if He were nothing more—a duty to which imitation can contribute the only possible approach to a payment. The first step towards attaining the supernatural life which He alone can bestow, is the sight of His life, unique, sublime, yet to be imitated by us; the life of one who showed how God lives in human nature, how God meets the sufferings and sorrows of a fallen world, perfect Man, because perfect God.

But we all of us instinctively feel that we must not stop here. We have had enough, and more than enough, of theorists, of men who soar up into the profound abyss of idealistic theories, and leave

men untouched, unmoved, unhelped, or even more hopeless than they were before, as, like the lost soul in Michael Angelo's 'Doom,' they sink deeper into the hell of despair at the sight of another's heaven. Even the law of God as given to Moses, holy, just, and good as it was, seemed weighted with this difficulty, whensoever it seemed to be just lifting up humanity out of the mire, the rope snapped, sin dragged him back again by its dead weight and he cried out, 'By the law is the knowledge of sin.' There was no point of contact, no grip, no elevating principle in the law, no capacity for grasping the highest life in fallen man; but with Jesus Christ there is the welcome point of the message, not, 'I am come to show men the way of life,' but, 'I am come that they may have life, that I may bestow it on them.'

And let us remember, once for all, that this does not merely mean an expenditure of love and sacrifice on the world as we are sometimes told, or that the existence of love would make an ideal Church. It means this, but much more. You may any day see for yourselves an expenditure of love and sacrifice, which yet is absolutely useless for the purposes of rescuing or saving a man in some terrible catastrophe. A man may be drowning in the river, and those who love him may be standing on the bank in an agony of fear and horror, they may even jump into the water in the extremity of self-sacrifice; but, after all, it is only the expert swimmer, or one who can apply an apparatus for saving life, who is of any avail to rescue him. A man may fall down in a fit in the street, and those who love him best may, by their well-meant endeavours to relieve him, only contribute to his malady. It is again the expert, the doctor, or the nurse who can save him. So with our blessed Lord. It is not love that does it all—love by itself—but the love of God, that is, love which has the knowledge of the man's deep-seated malady, not of its more prominent symptoms only, and so, with the knowledge of the malady, has the knowledge of the only possible remedy, to which He must certainly claim a monopoly, inasmuch as He alone knows the conditions which make it effectual, or the deep-seated nature of the disease which it is meant to reach.

If only we could get out of the way of thinking that the sacramental system is a sort of ecclesiastical outwork of religion with some good points in it, but quite unnecessary, if only we could bring ourselves to remember that He who knew what was in man, and loved man, and sacrificed Himself for man, certainly said of one sacrament —almost certainly of two—that it was necessary to salvation, we should at least hesitate before we treated these matters as of light importance. We should hesitate to think that the first requisite in a good physician was mere love for his patient, rather than know-

ledge of his subject. Neither are we to regard this as a mere academic study, much less as a formula with which we must be acquainted, and for the ignorance of which perhaps we shall be judged. The whole system, if it is anything, is one of practical utility bearing on the question before us.

II. 'I am come that they might have life.' Surely this means that He would confer on man something more than an example. The power to live must first oppose itself to those forces of death which make true life so terribly difficult. Man was wounded, humanity was stricken, his heart's blood was ebbing away through the wounds. Jesus Christ had to meet a foe who for centuries had expended his force on human nature. Every attempt, every temptation, every wile of Satan, had carried in with it further and further the principle of death. The lower passions which for ages he had fanned so successfully were in a state of servile war against the will and the higher principle of life; bodily death and decay advanced to their aid with giant strides. More than this, the paralysis of the will was almost complete. 'I see the better course, and I approve it; I follow the worst.' More than this, the higher spiritual life was stopped off and the intellectual appreciation clouded. 'Evil, be thou my good' was its extreme development, the stern morality of God was watered down, the warning lights of His precepts were put out. Certainly a mere love for humanity would have been simply impotent without power of this kind. Art had tried to elevate, new systems of morality had done their best, splendid examples of virtue, magnificent training of mind and body; but no, the world was sinking back by its own vices. Love was not enough, sacrifice was not enough. Something must be done to stop the ebbing away of life through the gashes of death. And so at once there appears in our blessed Lord's plan a sacrament which strikes a blow directly at that death which made the higher life before impossible; Holy Baptism was given with, and as a necessary supplement to the teaching of the world. 'Go and teach all nations' is not enough. They had had exhortation enough and to spare before. 'Go and baptize all nations' is not enough—it is not a charm—but, 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, bidding them to observe all things that I have commanded them'—there is no uncertainty here, no idea of a too great exclusiveness—'and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.' Holy Baptism was given in order that a new nature might be ours, without which goodness were impossible; to give us, instead of that crumbling weak nature, honeycombed by every form of Satan's malice, the vigorous constitution out of which He could draw the spiritual life. It was, as it were, a preliminary step to the well-

known action of the sculptor who darted on the block of marble, and said he was going to let the angel out of it. Jesus Christ had first to create the marble block, and then to let out the angel image of which it was capable, as it were, imprisoned in it. By Holy Baptism He opposed Himself to the dread incapacity of original sin, and still as flaws developed, as actual sin still works its will owing to our weakness, again and again He bids the Church grapple with sin, snap it off, cut it out, like a black, disfiguring vein of imperfection, until by degrees the death principle is removed. The combat is a long one, the chastisement is severe, He cuts long and deep. 'He restoreth my soul,' again and again by the exercise of His healing blow. But there is more than love and sacrifice here—it is the knowledge of the skilled Physician who goes deeper than the few striking symptoms, and prescribes for something more than the local affection.

But, besides this, there is the other side. He does not merely shut off the lower life of death, or cut away the diseased life which threatens our existence; His promise of life goes higher still. Christ has produced a higher type of character which does not merely consist of virtue but of holiness. Do not let us contrast the higher types of non-Christian or non-sacramental character with the lower types of Christian and Church character; do not let us triumphantly bring a moral heathen in comparison with a coarse and besotted Christian, who of his Christianity retains only the name, of his sacramental life only the black embers; but let us compare the highest types of each and see if there is really to be obtained an exact representation of Christ, as exact as we can make it with our imperfect materials, but on the system of His own ordaining. Up to a certain point there is great, wonderful, pure morality, splendid devotion, noble philanthropy, but a touch does it; just a curve of the pencil, just a dot of the chisel, this gives the likeness just the charm, the evenness, the sweetness, the supernatural radiance, which is more than happiness, which is joy. It may be we have lost it, but it can be regained. The martyrs had it. Their insensibility to pain, their inflexible obstinacy, as it was called, which even their enemies could not understand, which caused them to be unmoved in the midst of torture—it is in these matters that the likeness comes, in the supernatural expression which comes to Christian character.

And how? Oh! there are capacities for this supernatural life in all of us, if we only knew where to look for it. Heaven lies about us, grace flows by us in a mighty stream. What are the windows through which the air of heaven comes in? What is the action whereby that stream flows into our inmost soul? It is obvious to mention one. The systematic reading of Holy Scripture; not

for polemical purposes, not to find sticks wherewith to beat an adversary, not with criticisms, but approaching it as we would approach the presence of God. Here, at all events, we can breathe a lighter atmosphere, with the eye of faith penetrating into the heart of Scripture, remembering that we must love it ere to us it will seem more than the word of man, remembering that it is true of God here, as it is true of God in His work around us:

> 'I know that Nature never did betray
> The heart that loves her. 'Tis her privilege,
> Thro' all the years of this our life, to lead
> From joy to joy; for she can so inform
> The mind that is within us, so impress
> With quietness and beauty, and so fill
> With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
> Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
> Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
> The dreary intercourse of daily life,
> Shall e'er prevail against us, nor disturb
> Our cheerful faith, that all that we behold
> Is full of blessing.'

How many a man there is to-day who would tell us, if he spoke sincerely, 'I cannot get on without my book, or my newspaper.' Surely a little perseverance in the thoughtful reading of God's Word would lead him also to say, 'I cannot get on without my daily reading of Holy Scripture.'

It is equally obvious to mention prayer—that great artery which binds us to the very heart of God—to be in the habit of prayer is to linger in the atmosphere of heaven. Moses goes in to talk with God, and there is a glow upon his face. He mingles in daily life as one from another world, and when this dies away, when reserve or even worldly business puts the veil upon his face which covers the receding glory, to pray again is to renew it; and in the life of prayer there is development of life, which is life indeed, supernatural life.

Even more obvious is the sacramental union which Christ opens up for us, in which we may drink in large draughts of that life, that a fuller and more generous life may come through our veins, so that in an audacity of realised strength we may not hesitate to say, 'Henceforth I live, yet not I, but Christ that dwelleth in me.'

III. The supernatural life is not a gift only to be received, but a work to do: first the stopping of the larceny of sin, the ebbing away of life, and then the throwing ourselves upon the great channel of supernatural grace, where we may drink in large draughts of the life of heaven. And is not this an Easter thought? Perhaps some one may say: 'This is impossible in an age like this.' Some may, perhaps,

turn from it contemptuously and mutter, 'Utopian! the world is too exacting, life is too real.' Can a promise like this, which is purely spiritual, be anything but Utopian? May it not even be subversive of human progress, as Gibbon scornfully suggests, when he placed Christianity as among the causes of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, inasmuch as he said, most untruly, it led men to neglect a real present for a visionary future. No, on the contrary, it is a real future. It is no mirage of a fevered thirst for the impossible, no empty happiness of mere castle-building. We may look askance at the vice of our professedly Christian towns, or just painfully realise that there are only here and there a few struggling centres breaking the gloom, like gas-lamps in some dimly-lighted street, which only seem to make the darkness more visible, that is all. Perhaps before now we have sat down, like the prophet, and we have wished to die in the hopeless task of pursuing an impossible ideal, or plunged into work hoping that its din and clatter would shut out the possibility of pausing to think, but God has shown us the seven thousand knees which have not bent to Baal; He has shown us where the plants of sanctity lie hid, betraying their humble presence only by the fragrance which escapes through the jealous leaves of their humility. Granted that this higher life is not so prominent, that it does not strive nor cry nor lift its voice in the streets, yet it is not so rare as we are tempted to believe. How often one might find, and be ashamed at our own half-heartedness to find, lives of splendid devotion blooming only just above the flood-marks of the waves of sin, where the brine of temptation dashes up its salt mist and withering spray, carrying death to a religion less firmly planted, less supported by God. No, the supernatural life is not Utopian; Easter shows us how it is possible the same Easter sun which rolls back the mist from the grave, rolls back also the gloom which envelops the approaches to the higher life. 'Keep the flower always in the sun,' was the advice given to a child here in London when trying to rear a plant in some gloomy garret. It is God's Easter message to us, 'Keep your life always in the sun.' At morning set it in the doorway of devotion, where the first rays may light upon it; at mid-day still keep it where the light of God falls on the busy stairway of life; at eventide set it to catch the lingering rays of the setting sun in the calm peace of evening prayer; and so it will expand and grow, so it will throw off the blight of decay which clings to its shoots and withers up its vitality. One by one its leaves will unfold, its flowers develop, drawn ever towards its sun. Such might have been the life of all of us if we had yielded ourselves all through to the progressive life of goodness which God designed for us, if youth and manhood and old age had each received their full

sunlight. Baptism would have taken us on with its great swelling tide until confirmation received us on its in-coming wave, and communion after communion would have added its brilliancy and lustre to the expanding life; Sunday after Sunday would have lifted us up step by step towards perfection, and still at eventide we should have had light on the last ridges of life which the sunlight caught as its rays were leaving the life which we live here below. Do we still say, 'Utopia!—this is too high for me!' Oh, no, let us take Christ at His word, let us take the Beatitudes which stand forth as the quintessence of Christianity, and, braced up by the creeds, and strengthened by the sacraments, slowly and gradually, one grace after another will unfold itself, our whole life be moulded and shaped to the exuberant vigour which is all around us, and the child of the Church will become like the child of nature.

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her, for her the willows bend,
Nor shall she fail to see
E'en in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

The stars at midnight shall be dear
To her, and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place,
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.'

CANON NEWBOLT.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

Following the Lamb of God.

Leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps. 1 S. Peter ii. 21.

I. A DEVOUT bishop of our Church, in his private prayers, entreats God to remember and bless those who had done him good in various ways, by their writings, or their examples, or their conversation, or their prayers, but among these he makes especial mention of those who had benefited him by injuries. Among his chief benefactors he numbers his enemies. This, I think, may serve as the best commentary we can make on

S. Peter's words with which the Epistle for to-day commences: 'This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.' And here we may observe, that this expression 'thankworthy' is our Lord's own word. 'If ye do good,' He says, 'to them which do good to you, what thank have ye?'

The Epistle for to-day speaks of the lost sheep who have returned to the Shepherd of the soul; and then the Gospel gives our Lord's own account of the Good Shepherd who dies for His sheep, who knows them all, and brings them that have been scattered abroad into one fold. And thus again is He brought before us in a new and endearing character and relationship, over and above all that was said in the Epistle. For in the Epistle He is as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; He would fix our eyes on Himself in His sufferings, that when we see Him upon the Cross we may learn to be of the same spirit, and derive inexpressible comfort and strength from His atoning Blood. But in the Gospel for to-day the Lamb that was slain hath become the Good Shepherd. And indeed, in the Book of the Revelation, S. John describes the Lamb that was slain as Himself feeding His sheep, and leading them unto living fountains of waters. The same He Himself teaches us in the character of the Good Shepherd; for already He hath shown His love in dying for them. As the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world, so is He ever the Good Shepherd that gives His life for the sheep; it is His own inseparable attribute.

II. 'I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.' He that died for us, and gave us that proof of His love, has not gone away, and departed, and left us in the wilderness, but is even now with us as the good Shepherd. He is not indifferent about us, of our ways and doings, but as a man careth for his own, which he hath bought at an exceeding high price, so He, as the Good Shepherd, careth for us. Nothing can describe this to us more forcibly than His own parable of the lost sheep. He knows no rest until He has found it; it is the object of all his care and thoughts; He wanders seeking for it; and when He has found it, what does He do? He bears it, rejoicing, on His shoulders; He cannot withhold His joy; He calls on all to rejoice with Him. No less tender and affectionate are the many descriptions of Him as the Good Shepherd through the Old Testament, where, as if in allusion to our Lord's taking little children into His arms, it is said, 'He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom'; to which is added, 'and shall gently lead those that are with young'; as with a particular watchful care for each one, as if He had none other but that one to care for.

Blessed is he who knows Christ, not only as the Lamb of God, but

also as the Good Shepherd, who once died and now careth for him, and in whose care he can lack nothing. He gave His life for the sheep, that they by His dying may live; that they may feed on Him and have life. And what if in this new life in Him He should require them to die with Him to their former life; to be 'dead to sin'? what if after recovering His sheep that had strayed He should hereafter make a hedge about Him with thorns, is He less on that account the Good Shepherd?

III. 'The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.' This, again, is the mark of Himself as the Good Shepherd as distinguished from anything besides; that He knows each one of His sheep with a very intimate, peculiar knowledge. He searcheth the inmost thoughts. As the sunbeam in a dark room, so is His eye in the heart of hearts. And now, this point of His intimate knowledge might be to each of us no subject of comfort and encouragement, but of alarm and despair, were it not that He is 'the good,' the merciful and loving Shepherd. His eye in the heart is not only light, but it is likewise love. Therefore, He says not only that He knows His own, but also that He is known of them. They that are His by an intimate communion with Him, know Him with a divine and unearthly knowledge; they know Him as 'good'—as good in a sense that nothing else can be good. They know Christ as the Good Shepherd, for they know Him as God, who only is good. To know God is to know that God is love. The faithful Christian has a knowledge of God, not merely from the study of His Word or His works, but from a secret revelation of Himself which God makes to the heart. In the same way as you may know a man from reading an account of him, or from his writings; but this is a very different matter from knowing him by long intimacy as a friend. Nay, the knowledge of God is infinitely more than this—that pearl of great price—that hidden manna which the Christian gains, when He knows Christ and is known of Him as His own. This union is not like that of man with man, but is like that of the Blessed Trinity, which is unspeakable.

I. WILLIAMS.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Good Shepherd.

I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. S. JOHN x. 14.

HAVE taken these words from the Gospel as one of the most remarkable passages which bring before us the special subject of contemplation for these forty days between Easter and Whitsuntide. These forty days were the days of the Lord's tarrying upon the earth in order to teach His first disciples, and through them His Church to the end of time, what was to be the certainty of the law of His new presence with them after His Resurrection again from the dead. Now these forty days are marked in the record of what happened in them by two great features: by their teaching eminently the faithful that the Lord was in very deed with them; that He came into the midst of their public assembly; that He gave this new glory to their corporate action, making them understand the meaning of these dark words of promise—dark when they were spoken, but clear now—'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them'; teaching them the certainty of His presence, that it was a presence not like the presence of a friend who is indeed absent from us, but the memory of whose voice hanging upon the charmed ear seems yet to syllable itself forth to our listening faculty, not like the presence of a friend when we recall his every feature and say, 'Here he stood by me, here he comforted me, here he bore with me,' a presence you see which rests indeed in the mind, and imagination, and memory of the rememberer—a presence not like that; He was to teach them that there was another presence, really a coming of Himself, so that He heard the words they spoke when they saw Him not, so that He took part in the conversation going on, so that He stood in the midst of them when they were gathered in the upper chamber to remember His name, ate before them, showed them His hands and His side, made one and another know that He was Himself in very deed beside them. And yet another feature is marked equally here with this, the feature, namely, of mystery incomprehensible, the absolutely impossible tracking where He was, whence He came, whither He retired during these forty days, or indeed how He was present with them; sometimes under another form, sometimes as on the shore of the lake, revealing Himself but by degrees to them.

sometimes standing, though the door was closed, in the midst of them, and yet showing that He was not a spirit but had flesh and bones; again being with them throughout these forty days, but at distant intervals, with apparently no law of coming except this one of joining Himself to their first official gatherings in a special sort; hiding from them where He was when they saw Him not; hiding from them how it was that He brought His presence close to them when He came to teach His Church this great lesson, to the end that not by inquisitive seeking into the conditions of His coming but by faithful acceptation of the certainty of His presence were they to attain to this unspeakable blessedness; teaching them by the pattern of S. Thomas that they might even shatter faith by encouraging curiosity, that they might even lose the certainty of His being there by disputing as to the manner of His being there. Now this seems to be the great lesson of these forty days, and amongst all the passages which practically speak of this to us, I know none more remarkable, more quickening, and, at the same time if received simply, more comforting that these which I have read this morning to you: 'I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep'—as we render it in the Authorised Version but as it is in the original—'I am the Good Shepherd, and know My own, and am known of Mine.'

I. Now observe, first, there is a double knowing spoken of here, and that double knowing is distinctly spoken of in the two clauses, they being two correlative clauses, the one depending upon the other. 'I know My sheep,' that the fountain-head,—'and am known of Mine,' that the correlative truth. No knowing Him, beloved, if He had not known us. And this knowing of us, mark you, even this is a thing as it is revealed to us of degrees. The figure of the shepherd of the sheep in these eastern lands brings Him I think very close to us if we will receive it. We know something of a shepherd's care here, but we must go in thought to the lands in which the Lord spake to enter into this truth fully.

1. Now then, there is first the Shepherd's general knowledge of His flock. He sees them all. They are all before Him. He can tell at a glance whether any are missing. He can tell at a glance whether strangers are in the flock. And there is this general knowledge of all His professing people, there is this general knowledge of all His true people from the beginning to the end. All are before Him. Although there comes in the mystery of man's probation, and though that is made even a part of the very being of the Lord Jesus as Man, yet in another sense, all are now before Him, and He sees from the beginning every one that shall be gathered at last into the eternal fold. 'I know Mine own.'

2. But then there is beyond this a particular knowledge. The

Shepherd's general care over the flock must be carried out into the knowledge of each one of those whom He is tending, and, as we read in another place, He calls His sheep by name. Each one in his own personality, each one is before Him as if there were no other in this crowded world. The shepherd, especially in that land, had this intimate knowledge of his sheep.

3. And this knowledge thus intimate was, observe, a knowledge of care and of love. The context brings this out strikingly. Look at the verse before, 'The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and know Mine own, and am known of Mine,' that is to say, 'There is in Me this care for each one which is lacking in the shepherd': and that care bosoms itself upon His love for each one. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.' This love He manifested.

4. And it was not a love for humanity, it was a love for the separate souls of which humanity is made up. It was not the false glow which leads the spurious lover of man when he looks upon a multitude to be moved into a sort of compassionate feeling toward them: it was the love of the Father to the children, knowing each one, and loving all because He loved each one separately. That was the love of Christ, the 'I' which said, 'I know whom I have chosen,' looking upon Judas, looking upon Peter, knowing that both would deny Him, knowing that there was truth in one and the love therefore of the Lord resting upon him, the knowledge of love, and that love running out into care, care showing itself in its every manifestation, guarding each separate sheep from the prowling beast of night, guarding Peter from him who fain would have him but that the prayer of Christ had gone before the enemies' assault, guarding each one from the beginning to the end, each one of His, filling them with the appointed food, changing the pasture even as they needed, leading them by the still water in the time of drought, yea, and going after the wanderer when he leaves the flock, forsakes the Shepherd, goes out into the ways, becomes entangled in the thorns, and is all but the prey of the prowling beast, but still unforgotten by that care bosomed upon love; and so the Lord, the Shepherd, goes forth after the wanderer, seeking him in his wandering, finding him where the thorns of the world have got him and are tearing him, keeping by His mysterious providence the evil one from having his way with him, unwinding the thorn, and putting the precious burden upon His shoulder, and bringing him back rejoicing; even as He did for all in the first offering of Himself so doing again for each in the multiplied wandering of the uncertain sheep whom yet He loveth. This, this even to the end, is what these words tell us. The mystery which

says, 'None shall pluck them out of my hand,' the mystery which tells us that this great love of the Shepherd for those He knows as His will make Him keep them even until that day.

II. And then, there is the correlative: 'I known Mine own, and am known of Mine.' If you would take to yourself the comfort of what I have dared to set before you in its simplicity as this great truth of God's Word, if you would take it to yourself mark this, these two stand together, bound together by the indissoluble bond of the word of the Almighty. 'I know Mine own, and am known of Mine.' No taking the comfort of the first without knowing the reality of the second. Mark you that.

And now observe, that second is the answering image of the first, as it is cast from Christ upon the heart of man. It is an answering image. As all that is good in us is from Him, as it is of mere grace and love that any soul loves God and follows Him, and not from its own choice, so here is the same truth shown. The knowing Christ is but the image cast upon thy soul, of the being known of Christ. And as there is a general knowledge of all the sheep, so there is a general knowledge of Christ. You all have it. Every one in this Church to-day, I suppose, would confess that Jesus Christ has come in the Flesh. You have all got that. As there is in Him, not only the general knowledge, but there is also the particular knowledge, so there must be in you, not that general knowledge only, but the personal, inworked, inwrought knowledge of Him if you take to yourself the comfort of being amongst those He knows.

And observe how that branches forth. As love is the very characteristic of His knowledge of His own, so love bred of His love is the very characteristic of this personal knowledge of Him, love that master passion, that to which alone the will of man bows, as the iron casts itself into the liquid stream under the breath of the furnace, that which alone can make the hard heart of fallen humanity break into the stream of obedience: personal love to Him, the return of His personal love to you, bred of it. 'We love Him because He first loved us'; 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.' There must be this ring concentric within ring, the general knowledge running out into the particular personal knowledge, and that personal knowledge the knowledge of love. BISHOP MACKARNESS.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Good Shepherd.

I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. S. JOHN x. 14, 15.

I. OUR Lord is drawing a contrast between Himself and a certain class in the community, whom He denominates 'hirelings.' He means by the phrase the persons who undertake the religious instruction and supervision of others—not from a sincere desire to benefit their fellow-men by leading them to God, but for the sake of the emolument, or honour, or influence, or power, which the possession of the office is found to confer on themselves. These men, He says, when any danger threatens the flock which has been intrusted to them, will be sure to beat ignominious retreat. They care for nothing but their own interest and their own comfort. They are not in any true or real way connected with the sheep of the flock; and this being the case, it is only to be expected that, when the wolf comes, their impulse will be to provide for their own security, and they will inevitably flee away, leaving the flock to its fate. On the other hand, the good shepherd will stand forth in defence of his charge when the enemy approaches, and, if need be, will perish at his post. All this is intelligible enough. In the 'wolf' we have the teachers of religious error, who sometimes creep into the bosom of a Christian Church, bringing spiritual ruin with them; or the bitter persecutions which every now and then come down like a tornado upon it, sweeping away before the blast the herd of feeble and unstable disciples; and then, behind these, we have as the author and originator of them all, the dark, foul, malignant, evil spirit—Satan, the adversary, the unrelenting foe of God and man. And in the 'good shepherd' we have—first of all, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and, next to Him (though at an infinite distance from Him), the host of teachers and preachers, whom He has inspired with His Spirit, and called by His grace, and sent forth to do His work in the world, the gracious and loving work of seeking and saving those that are lost.

But intelligible as the expression 'good shepherd' is, it is worth while expending a few sentences of closer explanation upon it. The word usually employed in this connection in the Gospel of S. John is the word 'true.' Jesus, says the Apostle, is the 'true' light; and Jesus says of Himself, 'I am the true vine'; and again, 'I am the true bread,' or rather, 'My Father giveth you the true bread from

heaven.' You take the meaning; true is not here the opposite of false. It does not point to veracity. It signifies 'real'—the thing symbolised rather than the symbol—the substance and not the shadow; and we are to understand by the language just quoted, that whatever qualities and powers are represented by 'light,' and 'bread,' and 'vine,' are to be found realised, and embodied, and exhibited in their fullest development and perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the present instance the Lord departs from His usual custom, and instead of the word 'true,' employs 'good' or 'noble,' as perhaps it might be rendered. And why? Probably because He wished to convey the idea of attractive moral loveliness, which is implied in the character of the shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep; and because He wished to remind us of the appeal which that character makes to the latent generosity of the human heart. The phrase 'true light' suggests that all the knowledge of God that exists in the world, or has existed in bygone days, flows as from a fountain from Christ Himself. We talk of conscience and reason and tradition and the profound thoughts of great thinkers; right enough; but, after all, Christ is the real source, whether in heathen or in Christian lands, of all that men have learnt or understood about the Deity. 'That was the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'

II. Let us advance now to the second clause of the text, and consider the knowledge which Christ has of His people, and His people have of Him. Now, to us—I suppose to all of us—there is something exceedingly monotonous about a flock of sheep. Each animal looks exactly like its neighbour—the face, the fleece, the shape, even the very size, being, as far as we can see, the same in all. But to the shepherd of the sheep—if he be skilful and experienced—the case is very different. He individualises the creatures under his care; and he will tell you that there is as much difference in the features of his sheep as there is in the features of human beings, as much difference in their characters and tempers as there is in the characters and tempers of the people of his acquaintance: and he studies and knows them all. Such a precise and intimate knowledge (but on an infinitely larger scale) has the Lord Jesus Christ of us, His disciples. We contemplate our fellow-men in the mass. There is the congregation, the parish, the city, the county, the nation; but our individual acquaintance with one another is very slight. Indeed, we are, to a great extent, closed volumes—even to those who know and love us best. But everything in us and about us lies open to the Omniscient Christ. From Him no secrets are hid. He treads the pathways of the inmost recesses of our souls. He knows every twist and turn,

every nook and corner, in which our thoughts are likely to lurk. He has followed us step by step in our past history. He observes our present movements. He is tracking us onward as we pass out into the unknown future.

But there is yet another step for us to take, before we arrive at the full meaning of this part of our subject. The language of the passage points to the relation that exists between the Divine Father and the Divine Son. That relation, of course, is one of love—of love infinite and unspeakable. Knowing ourselves what love is, we can form some conception—and we are clearly intended to form some conception—of the love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father; but we know very little. The feeling of affection which we experience, and which constitutes the chief happiness of our human life, is, after all, only like a single ray of light flowing from the vast orb that shines down upon us from the sky: and when we are speaking upon the subject, it becomes us to proceed with the utmost reverence and caution. This mutual love between the Father and the Son implies a perfect understanding of each other, and a perfect sympathy. There is not—there cannot be—the shadow of a difference arising between these two Divine Persons. There is not—there cannot be—a thought or a feeling in the one, that is not entered into and shared by the other. Now, observe that the Saviour, in the passage before us, makes a comparison between this divine love, and the love which exists between Him and His people. There is a correspondence, a parallelism. As the Father loves the Son—so does the Son love His people. As the Son loves the Father—so do Christ's people love Christ. The first statement is fairly intelligible. The second can only become so by our remembering that the eye of Christ is fixed rather upon what ought to be, than what is; rather upon the glories of the future state, when we shall know even as we are known, than upon the feebleness and imperfection of the present.

G. CALTHROP.

The Allegory of the Good Shepherd.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
S. JOHN X. 11.

I. 'BY Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.'

All will agree that the first instinct of human nature is self-preservation. We are all familiar with thrilling stories of the extreme tenacity with which men cling to life, of the terrible hardships they will endure to preserve life. So our Lord promises that

the first result of entering His Kingdom shall be 'Salvation,' 'he shall be saved,' the preservation of life, not merely of that βίος which we live, but of that ζωή by which we live. Let us pause to consider whether we are so in that kingdom, that we are cultivating the true life. He is the life; to be incorporated into Him must be indeed to live!

II. 'And shall go in and out.'

The next instinct in the order of nature is the love of liberty. Man's first craving is for life, but life without liberty is so unendurable that history is largely a record of the struggles for liberty of patriots, who willingly laid down life in the effort to gain liberty. So our Lord's next promise is that His service shall be perfect freedom, 'By Me, if any man enter in . . . he shall go in and out,' and here let us remember the distinction between liberty and licence, the compatibility of liberty and law; for liberty has been well defined as 'the power of a living being to act without hindrance according to the true law of its life.'

III. 'And shall find pasture.'

The third need of man is that without which neither life nor liberty could be prolonged, food. In life man has a gift conditioned by the law that he must eat, thus conditioned to teach him dependence on God. Man has appetites mental and moral as well as physical. Man craves to know and to love, the world tries to satisfy these appetites and fails, Christ here reveals the great truth that in His Kingdom, by incorporation into Him, man shall find pasture, satisfaction for every lawful craving of his nature.

Conclusion.—In other parts of the marvellous allegory other laws of Christ's Kingdom are revealed, but surely in this wondrous verse are summed up man's greatest desires, Life, Liberty, and Love!

Rev. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

IV OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Sin of Moses.

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. NUMBERS XX. 12.

HE Lord here acts with great severity towards two of His servants, and it may be well to recount the circumstances. Water failed the congregation, they murmured as their fathers had done; Moses brought their case before the Lord, who commanded him to take his rod, but not to use it, but simply to speak to the rock, and it should give forth water. Was this rock the same which was smitten nearly forty years before? That depends upon our interpretation of 1 Cor. x., 'And they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.' From the whole account we should gather that it was the same rock, and the miracle, of course, was not greater than the daily shower of bread round about their tents, which ceased not till they entered Canaan. Anyhow, they disobeyed God, who had bidden them speak to the rock; and for this, and because, perhaps, they had spoken as if they themselves could bring out the water, 'Hear now, ye rebels, must we bring you water out of the rock?' And for this act of faithlessness or of disobedience God would not permit Moses, though he entreated that the punishment might be removed, to bring the people of Israel over Jordan.

The sin of Moses appears rather as a sin of disobedience or of passion than of unbelief; but if we knew all the circumstances we should see that there was some want of faith, of reliance upon God, which brought down God's displeasure.

Anyhow, we learn this lesson, that nearness to God and friendship with God, such as was enjoyed by Moses, is not to be presumed upon; God's commands are to be obeyed to the letter even by one so near to Him as Moses. It has been suggested as another reason for this severity: the smitten rock was a type of Christ, who was to be smitten once for all, and then to give out His virtue in answer to prayer, and Moses and Aaron, by smiting the rock a second time, destroyed the principal typical feature. M. F. SADLER.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Individual and the Masses.

So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat down under it in the shadow till he might see what would become of the city, etc. JONAH iv. 5-11.

'THE individual and the masses.' This is a subject which is, I think, suggested to us by this very graphic passage of the Holy Bible. We note, in the first place, the individual—the miserable Jonah—in his solitary booth, sullenly and silently waiting, watching for the doom of the city. On the other hand, we see that great city—the greatest city of the then world—with more than half-a-million of souls, stretching out before the prophet's gaze, and he caring not for it. And then we have, connecting the two, the regard of Almighty God for both, His notice of the masses, His notice of the individual. And so I have thought it might be well to speak to you to-day about the masses of London, and to try and point what I have to say by bringing before you this very striking passage, which speaks to you of your own individual responsibility and of God's mind towards you clothed with that responsibility, and also of His mind towards the masses.

I. Now, as the subject of the masses is the most important of the two, first let me speak a few words on God's notice of the masses. From the last verse which I read to you, in which God takes note of the number of the children of Nineveh, we may be quite sure that God does take note of numbers. At first sight, this may seem contradictory of His very nature. I can quite conceive of some of you saying, 'Surely, God the Infinite, the All in All, the Beginning and the End, in whose sight all things are for a day, all times present—surely He takes not note of numbers. To Him there is no greater or less; to Him, in His infinite life, no great or small.' To argue thus is to forget a great many passages in the Holy Bible, and, above all, to pass over those passages which speak of the personality of God and His personal relations to every individual. He, and He only, who notes the sparrows fall, He, and He only, who counts the hairs of the individual head, can rightly estimate the value of numbers; and so over and above man we find in the Holy Bible the eye of God distinctly attracted in a remarkable way towards places where men are massed. You will all recollect how in the Old Testament the eye of God was drawn down towards the children of bondage, how He came and blessed them because He saw their multitudinous sorrows; you will all recollect how again the same proof is brought before us in the wilderness, when over and over again we find Him feeding, caring for,

guiding, guarding the multitude and speaking of them as multitudes. Coming to the passage which is before us to-day, we find the same God taking note of the numbers in the city of Nineveh. We pass on to the New Testament, and we find our dear Lord and Master touched by the sorrows of the multitude as they sit hungry before Him on the hillside in Galilee, and feeding the five thousand in His tender compassion. We find Him weeping over the passing multitude on Palm Sunday. And there are many other passages which do teach us to believe that God does take note of the multitudinous cities of the world with a special, moved regard.

II. Try for one moment to group in some way the population of this great city. Think for one moment of the 'city of sorrow' which is represented to us by the people at the present moment dwelling in the hospitals. Think of the countless thousands you will find in our unions. Think of the large number you will find in our prisons, of that great army of the criminal classes which is stated at above eighty thousand. Think of the fallen women, who night by night go out to ply their awful trade, at the same number. Think of the toilers dwelling under the present social conditions, and the upper ten thousand who are not caring as they ought to care for them. Just think what God is looking down upon as He regards the millions of London. And then I would have you bear this in mind, that this enormous population is perpetually on the increase. Fifty-four to sixty thousand souls are added to the diocese of London yearly, and I want you to think of the sort of people that are perpetually flocking up to London. They are for the most part persons who have already failed in life. They come up, weakened by past failure, with the momentary hope that they will do better in London, with false hopes of what they will find in London, and they rarely leave. They gradually degenerate; they find fresh disappointment. And what must be the outcome to their children? Just think, a large provincial city—sixty thousand souls or nearly so—added to our diocese every year; how are we to care for them? How are we to find for them those spiritual means of grace which we ourselves enjoy, and which we recognise to be essential for the wellbeing of man, how, unless persons in your more privileged position will help in the great work that lies before us?

The Bishop of London's Fund has during the last twenty-seven years been the means of building and establishing a hundred and seventy parishes. I want you to think what that means. Think of London at this present moment without those hundred and seventy parishes which have been during the last twenty-seven years set on foot mainly through the instrumentality of this fund. Think for one moment what is represented of real honest social work, work of public

order as well as of love and religion. Surely a society that has done this deserves your support. The purpose and object of the fund is to build churches, schools, mission-rooms; to send clergy, mission-men, Bible readers, to those large populations. It helps the East of London as well as the West; it helps the whole of London, and you must not for one moment suppose that its area is confined to the West of London only. It has done, and is still doing, enormous work in the East. But the populations that are now growing and increasing are in the West. Fulham has increased by thousands during the last few years, and the people are all poor, and if you don't help them, they must be lost entirely to the Church of which you are members. I cannot speak too strongly, I cannot urge you too forcibly to give more largely than you have in the past to these parishes, to this great fund, the Bishop of London's Fund. I would have you bear in mind that His eye is looking down on these countless millions.

II. My heart has been so full of the masses that I have almost forgotten to say a word about the individual. Can you imagine anything more absolutely mean and degrading than the individual as he is represented encircled by the environment of his own comfort, vexed when that comfort is in any way disturbed, thinking more about the loss of the shade of the gourd than of the half-million of souls within reach of his very eyes. There was Nineveh stretched out before him, there was the noise of their toil and labour, there was the crack of the whip over the slave's bent shoulders, there also was the merriment and joy of those that were happy, and that miserable, selfish prophet thought of nothing but himself. Of all the mean sights in the world a selfish man is the meanest. Remember this in your individual life, God does not deal with the world in masses, though He has regard for masses. He speaks to the individual Adam—'Adam, where art thou?' The individual life is watched by God, not only in its individual responsibility, but in its responsibility towards the masses of life that go to make up this great city. And when the city's voice rises in your ears, when you are riding in happiness, ease, and leisure, do sometimes think what that tremendous roar of the London streets means, beyond its voice of misery and its voice of toil—thousands upon thousands going out upon the march of noble life with the motto written over them, 'Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour unto the evening,' a motto which not even the misery of the world can strip of its nobility; sometimes in the voice of the people hear the voice of God speaking to the many millions of London whom He would not lose, for that is the true translation of the words, 'Shall I not spare? shall I not be loth to lose?'

BISHOP EARLE.

V. OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Conquest of Death.

O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? 1 Cor. xv. 25.

ND all the glorified inhabitants of heaven take up the challenge, and say, 'Where?' And the souls of the faithful witnesses that lie under the altar cry out exultantly, 'Where?' And the very last of our beloved ones, over whose remains we scatter dust in 'God's-Acre,' is ready to make answer, 'Where?' 'Not on us had death or the grave any victory,' say the noble army of martyrs; 'for we overcame by the blood of the Lamb.' 'Not on us,' declare the great company of the redeemed; 'for we are made more than conquerors through Him that loved us.' 'Not in us,' exclaims the teeming population of the paradise-world; 'for the Lord of Life and Immortality has us in His holy keeping, and He has the keys of Hell and Death.' 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?'

I. Our meditations may first be directed to the sting of death—what it is, and how it is to be taken away. 'O death, where is thy sting?' is the fine interrogatory of the Apostle. Where is it? What is it? Wherein lies its great strength? To which the first answer to be returned is, the sting of Death is the sting of natural fear, the instinctive dread we all have of the act of dissolution. It is the invincible recoil of flesh and blood from the fulfilment of that sentence, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.' The Apostle distinctly recognises this as a part of the sting, when he specifies, as the result of Christ's death, that He thereby 'delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject unto bondage.'

But besides the physical circumstances attendant upon death, there enters into our fear of it another element, constituting a far more dreadful part of its sting than any amount of bodily suffering could be. I mean the conviction, which conscience cannot get rid of, that death is a punishment for sin, and is introductory to some further punishment which lies beyond. We have instincts within us which tell us that death is a retributive thing—a diversion from the first intention of our creation—that man has done something to make it necessary; but that originally man was not made to die. What we

call 'death natural,' it has been well said, should rather be called 'death unnatural'; death being the reversal of the true law of our being. Hence, in explaining why men are afraid of death, we say it is not nature trembling at what she may have to suffer, so much as conscience affrighted at the penalties it feels itself to deserve. 'We have the sentence of death in ourselves'—that is, of death both as a fact and as a punishment of voluntary transgression. It is as if the law were written in our hearts. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all men have sinned.'

II. Here, then, is the true answer to the question, 'O Death, where is thy sting?' And what is the sting? It lies embodied in the holy law of God; the law which we feel we have broken in ten thousand ways, and which is yet inexorable in its demands to have its requirements satisfied. The feeling of this unpaid debt, or of some dark retribution looming in the future if it be not paid, rises up with terrible strength before the imagination when we think we are going to die. Lord Byron once narrowly escaped from drowning; but, recovering himself, he tells us he was struck with the energetic efforts he had instinctively made to preserve life, knowing that in his calm moments he had often wished to die. But S. Paul would have explained why he made these efforts, that his conscience looked much further than his philosophy, and that it is not in the power of infidelity itself to blunt or to deaden the sharp sting of death. Now, we call death the King of Terrors, and rightly so; but remember, that which makes him the King of Terrors, that which makes his reign terrible, his night gloomy, his valley dark, his sting intolerable, is the implanted feeling of our nature that he is the commissioned messenger from Heaven, come to reckon with us for our sins. 'The wages of sin is death.'

III. But let me pass to the other member of this sublime interrogatory, 'O Grave, where is thy victory?'

If the grave can claim no victory at our entrance upon its confines, if it can exercise no lordship over us while we sojourn in its dominions, how is it made to lose its last semblance of triumph when it is made to become the passage-gate to glory and blessedness, and light and life? Yet, to these the grave must introduce us, yea, must be among the means by which we are made meet for our final inheritance. For, is it not written, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit'? Yes, our theology leaves room for the growth of sanctification in the grave-world, though not for penal discipline: for the putting on of beautiful garments, though not for prayers to have filthy garments taken away.

In other ways, the grave becomes the saint's servant. We cannot realise our full consolation and bliss without the redemption of the body. We must compel the grave to bring us back the body—to collect bone to bone, and part to part, the changed relics of the scattered body: whether mouldering in the dust under the village yew-tree, or bleaching on the snow of Alpine heights, whether crumbling under world-old pyramids or treasured in the sepulchral urn; all must come together, each to each, in order that, when the Lord Jesus comes from heaven, He may change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

D. MOORE.

Why we are often disappointed.

Why seek ye the living among the dead? S. Luke xxiv. 5.

I. WE are, all of us, in this life, seekers after one thing or another: seekers after that which, for the moment, we consider most of all to be desired; seekers after pleasure, seekers after riches, seekers after comfort, seekers after health.

I suppose that most of us have set before us the attainment of some end, which, once gained, we imagine that we must be happy and contented ever afterwards. And so with all our might we are seeking to reach that end. In our different ways, and according to our different notions of what is needed to make life happy, we are all seekers after happiness.

The day was just breaking, the shadows were dispersing. It was the dawn of the first Easter Day, and by the empty tomb of the risen Saviour the holy women were standing in the dim, uncertain light—sorrow, disappointment, dismay, written on their faces. What new trouble was this that had come upon them! The Body of Jesus was gone!

Then, as they stood there, sorrowful and perplexed, a bright form stood before them—an angel voice put to them the question of the text, a question of mingled pity and reproach. 'Why are ye sorrowful?' it seemed to say, 'I know ye seek Jesus of Nazareth. But ye do greatly err in seeking Him here. Did He not warn the Jews that on the third day the ruined Temple should be re-built? Did He not tell His disciples that on the third day the Son of Man should rise again? Sadness and disappointment are written on your faces, but do they not come of your ignorance and slowness of heart to believe your Master's words? Why need ye be sad? Why seek ye the living among the dead?'

So it has been again and again. So it is now. On this bright

spring morning, in the midst of our glad Easter Festival, when the whole world ought to be looking brighter to us, many hearts are sad and heavy. And, again, for the same reason. Because, like the holy women of old, people still come seeking 'the living among the dead.'

There are those who come seeking Jesus, but who seek Him, the living one, among the dead. That is, they would fain 'know Christ after the flesh'—the Man Christ Jesus, instead of the risen Christ their Lord and their God. Who would fain go on clinging, as the disciples did, to His humanity alone.'

But in this sense He is not here—He is risen. And faith is called upon to accept great mysteries.

If we are looking for lasting happiness in this world, we are seeking the living among the dead, for 'the fashion of this world passeth away.'

Then what lesson do we learn from all this but the Easter lesson, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above . . . Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.'

J. B. C. MURPHY.

The Scriptures for the Second Sunday after Easter.

THE Epistle for the day is, as usual, practical and didactic, exhorting to faithful endurance even of contradiction and evil doing, according to the example of Jesus. There is an evident opportuneness and fitness in the reference it makes to the Passion of our Lord, so recently commemorated as a striking example of patience. The tone of the entire passage of Scripture rises, verses after verse, until it culminates in the 25th, in the touching and admirable description Our Lord as 'the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.'

The Gospel follows, inculcating the same lesson in similar words, and those from our Lord Himself—'I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep,'—again with an unmistakable reference to the Passion. This beautiful sequence of thought comes down to us from the Sarum Office.

The Lessons have reverted to the systematic cycle of consecutive reading of Scripture, which has been interrupted to a certain extent by the occurrence of the Easter Festival.

In the Lessons from the Book of Numbers there are several suggestive subjects for sermons harmonising with the Easter Season. Thus the going up, the disappearance or assumption, as it were, of Aaron the typical priest, suggests our Lord's Ascension, and is, as it were, a

preparation for it; and the setting up of the brazen serpent is a type of the lifting up of Jesus on the Cross.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

He shows that He is not only a Shepherd, such as He had described above, but in a way altogether peculiar to Himself, is that Good Shepherd, who was to come, and who should give His life for His sheep, in a way that none else had done or should do. There have been many others who have laid down their lives, not for their own sheep, but for those who were the Lord's; Apostles, and many prophets, but no one after the same manner as Christ, laid down his life for the sheep, that He might redeem them by His death. 'The martyrs have not bestowed crowns, but received them,' Augustine and S. Leo were accustomed to say.

1. The people of Christ know Him as their Shepherd.
2. They listen to His voice and obey it.
3. They recognise His voice and His hand, both in blessing and in chastening.

The ministers of Christ are also shepherds of His people.

S. J. EALES.

The Power of His Resurrection.

That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made comformable unto His death. PHILIPPIANS iii. 10.

LET us try to speak, as the Lord hath taught us, of the mysterious power of His Resurrection.

I. And, first, what is it?

Specifically, distinct from any other that acts anywhere in the universe. We must insist on this, or we have no case at all. It cannot be reduced to any class, or worked into any system of similar forces. It cannot be made the subject of experiment to discover what it is; it cannot be explained in scientific terms or symbols. It is a power apart and by itself. There are physical forces; it is not one of them. There are moral forces; it is not one of them; working moral efforts, it is not merely and simply a moral force. There are spiritual forces; but this is more. When there was war in heaven, it was an instance of angel against angel, of spirit against spirit. When S. Michael contended with the devil about the body of Moses, it was spirit against spirit, the good against evil, the pure against the fallen. When the Spirit of God moved upon the waters, spiritual force went out to reduce confusion to order and to bring the earth out of the chaos. None of these instances of force gives the analysis of the power of the Resurrection. That power was a new thing in the universe: it came, with a certain event in the

history of this world; it could not have come till that event had taken place.

II. That which sets off this power from any and all others is a historical fact. The name of Christ, of Him who was crucified in Palestine, by order of Pontius Pilate, and in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, is a true name in history. That He was born, and lived, and died, will be conceded at once; nay, more, that He died a malefactor's death, under the Roman law, and by the sentence of a Roman tribunal. That He rose again from the dead, and appeared on the earth alive and well, after His death and burial, is the faith of a vast body of men, inhabitants of the earth to-day; some 300,000,000 aver that it was so. That has been the faith of other men, our predecessors, for nearly 1900 years. The faith of this great cloud of witnesses is a faith in a literal fact; that the very same Man, in His very same Body, did rise again from death. We use the word 'resurrection,' not as dissemblers, but as honest men, who say what they mean, and mean what they say. We use it, not by way of cloak, to give an air of orthodoxy to some unreal notion of our own. In using that term, now become so sacred, that to put a false sense on it would be to speak in riddles and turn a simple genuine word into a lie, we mean to express our faith that He did truly and bodily rise from death. If any terms in any tongue are apt to convey the idea of a literal resurrection of a real body, we intend to convey the notion which such terms express. This is what we believe, of His resurrection from the place of the dead, of His return to this earth from the place of the dead, wherever that place may be. But if so, then does it follow, that He still lives. His life as risen, may now be numbered, by the same calendar, which records the centuries of the era called by His name. 'Christ being risen, dieth no more.'

III. The power of the Resurrection is something above and beyond those lesser powers which the dead exert over the living, and men, during lifetime, on one another. It is a power resident in a risen personage, who has a true recorded history. In Him dwelt, of old, 'all the fulness of the Godhead.' That was, in eternity, and because He was the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, begotten of His Father before all worlds, and of one substance with Him. But more. 'In Him,' now, 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead,' but in a way, to wit, 'bodily.' Incredible as it may sound, that is the Apostle's statement, and no doubt can exist that he meant what he said. The fulness of the Godhead is ever the same. That fulness now dwells in Him 'bodily'; such indwelling commenced in time, since a body cannot be eternal. But the body spoken of is not that of the humiliation: it is the body of glory, the body which rose from the dead, the body which became incorruptible, immortal, powerful. And the

power of the Resurrection, whatever it be, flows from that body of glory in which the fulness of the Godhead now dwells; its seat is in that Body of the risen Lord; from that body as from a centre and point of departure it goes, active after its own way, and by its own law, and having nothing similar or equal to it here or elsewhere, before its own day or thereafter.

IV. Look at the text again. You will see that in speaking of 'the power of the Resurrection' the Apostle adds another phrase, 'the fellowship of His sufferings.'

We may not divide these two. The one belongs to the other. To know the power of His Resurrection, one must also know the fellowship in His sufferings. So then there is another death to die, over and above the natural death, and whatever goes with it. Christ's sufferings were summed up at His death for us sinners; to have fellowship in His sufferings is to die for Him, as He died for us. It is to die to the old nature, to the 'old man' of our fallen and sinful estate, to self, to the flesh, with its affections and lusts. And this kind of death is, and must be, self-inflicted. Every one born into the world must endure sorrow and pain, some time or other, in the natural order of things. Those give him no fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, unless He unite them by faith to the Cross, and silently offer them to His Lord. Fellowship in Christ's sufferings there can be none, till one will that it be so.

So then, before the power we speak of can be felt or known, two things are demanded of us. First, faith in it; a faith which lays hold of that and that only, and confesses that no other power in the universe is now, or ever will be, potent against death.

And secondly, there must be 'a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness': a voluntary renunciation of the corruptions which are in the world through lust, and an effort to rise again into the better life in Christ. Without these two preparations in themselves, the power of His Resurrection will remain to men an unknown force, as ineffective as the unknown God to the men of Athens.

MORGAN DIX.

The Easter Meals.

And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. S. LUKE xxiv. 30.

HE did eat before them. No doubt there is much that is mysterious here. It could not have been necessary for Him to have partaken of the food; but as the angels ate of the provision which Abraham brought forth, so Jesus Christ ate before the disciples

to confirm their faith. Therefore, let us rejoice as we think of these three Easter meals, for they make the fact of the Resurrection so unassailable.

But they bring before us also another thought. What a proof do they afford that His delights are still with the sons of men! For eating implies fellowship. If we had not had these three meals, we might have missed a glorious truth. When we had been assured of the truth of His Resurrection, we must have fallen down and worshipped; we should naturally have felt awe, as S. John was overcome by the sight of the risen Christ in Patmos isle. But we should have lost that holy familiarity which is our privilege to-day; nay, we should not have dared to conceive that it was possible. And what a loss this would have been, in times of sorrow and of trial, when we feel the need of a superhuman friend whom we may approach with boldness, and of whose sympathy we may be sure! Those little frictions, which form so large a portion of life's troubles, but which are so little in themselves, and which seem still less when told in the ears of some unsympathising friend,—how we delight to tell them in the ears of Jesus Christ, and feel sure that what is trying to us will never be trivial to our great sympathising Friend! How we love those feasts! For they prove He is still the same Jesus who was ever wont to eat with publicans and sinners; that still He loves to associate with His people; and therefore we too, as the penitent, may approach and bedew His feet with the rain of repentant sorrow, and anoint His head with the ointment of our adoration; we too may lean our aching heads upon His breast, and ask Him the questions which perplex our souls. Yes, for it is the risen Christ who invites us in Rev. iii. 20: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.'

But now let us examine these three narratives separately in detail.

I. The first of these Easter meals occurred at the close of His revelation of Himself to the two disciples journeying to Emmaus. It was in some respects the most unaccountable of all the appearances of our Lord. We are not surprised at the appearance of ver. 36 to His chosen Apostles, nor are we surprised at the appearance in ver. 34 to Simon Peter, even though he had thrice denied our Lord: nor at the appearance to Mary Magdalene, for her heart was so overflowing with love to her beloved Master. But that to these two unknown disciples—who, though they had heard the rumour of His Resurrection, yet nevertheless had so little faith that they did not even stay to inquire into the truths of the strange rumours which were afloat—He should not only have revealed Himself, but that He should have devoted so long a time of that first Easter Day removing their errors, dissipating

their doubts, establishing their faith, was at any rate remarkable. Then, at least, I learn there is hope for us. We are insignificant, we are weak in faith, we are ofttimes wandering in the dark; but the same Master who cheered them will abide with us, and chase away our sorrow, our darkness, and our doubts, with the light of His countenance and His love.

II. The second meal, in S. Luke xxiv. 42, was during His first appearance to the eleven—or rather to the ten; for Thomas was not with them when Jesus came. We are not astonished at this appearance; rather, if we wonder at all, we should wonder He had not appeared to them before. Perhaps they themselves were surprised that they had hitherto been passed over. Why had He appeared to the women, and to the two insignificant disciples walking to Emmaus, and why had He not appeared to them? Were they not His own chosen Apostles? Were they not to see Him in His Resurrection-glory? Oh yes! the Master was not unmindful of them, but He waited until they were all assembled in that upper room, hallowed by so many sacred memories; and then He appeared unto them, and spake unto them words of peace. And so we hope to have Him present with us to-night. We are gathered here in the Master's name; we have heard the glad news, 'Christ Jesus is risen to-day.' What think ye, that He will not come to our feast? Oh yes, he will! But first of all He must appear to the individual, and then He will appear to the Church. He must first appear to the Mary seeking Him with tears in the solitude of the garden, and to the repentant Peter, and to Cleopas and his companion as they converse together in the way upon high and holy themes, and then He will appear to the disciples in the upper room; and perhaps one reason why we do not realise His presence more in the upper room is because we do not oftener seek Him in the solitude of the chamber, or speak of Him as we talk to one another by the way.

III. The third Easter meal was upon the lake-shore of Galilee. Here the scene was quite different. Everything was bustling; here men were dragging nets, and here they were disentangling and counting fish; and yet Jesus Christ is here also, taking an interest in their fishing, and providing for the bodily requirements of the tired toilers. So, after we have seen Him in the solitude of the chamber, and in the sanctity of the Church, we may expect to find Him even in the bustle of our daily life, sympathising with our disappointments, guiding us in our successes and ofttimes withdrawing us into the secret of His presence for refreshment and reinvigoration.

E. A. STUART.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Patience. PATIENCE is but lying-to and riding out the gale.

1 S. PETER ii. 19-25. Pray and stay are two blessed monosyllables.

Never think that God's delays are God's denials. Hold; hold fast; hold out.

With time and patience, the mulberry-leaf becomes satin.

'Sire, it belongs to God's Church rather to suffer blows than to strike them; but let it be your pleasure to remember that the Church is an anvil which hath worn out many a hammer.'

The Good Shepherd. I. 'My sheep.' Whose?

The Good Shepherd's.

S. JOHN x. 27. 'Good,' because—

1. He gives them pasture: 'I am the Bread of Life.'

2. He does not desert His flock when the wolf (of trouble) comes: 'He seeth the wolf coming.'

3. He gives His life for the sheep.

II. Marks of knowing them—

1. They hear His voice.

2. He knows them (2 Tim. ii. 19).

a. Knows when they do not know themselves ('When saw we Thee,' etc.).

b. When they do not know Him ('Samuel did not yet know the Lord').

c. He knows them not simply by name, but all about them: knows as a parent knows his children.

III. They follow Him·

1. They do not lead.

2. They are passive—He goes before—('The footsteps of the flock').

3. This following leads to Glory ('Where I am, there shall also My servant be').

4. They never perish (ver. 28).

Shepherd and Sheep. I. The personal connection:

=a shepherd and his sheep.

S. JOHN x. 27. II. The Salvation of the flock consists in—

1. I know them (The Lord knoweth them that are His); they follow.

2. I give unto them eternal life, and they perish not at all

III. They cannot perish, because God is greater than all.

Third Sunday after Easter

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	1 S. PETER II. 11-17.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN XVI. 16-22.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	NUM. XXII.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	NUM. XXIII. OR XXIV.
SECOND LESSONS . . .	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Perfection.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.
S. MATTHEW v. 48.

AMONG the many 'old orders' which are, now-a-days, changing 'to give place to new,' not the least important is that 'old order' which, for centuries, has identified the highest morality with the following of the faith of Christ. Religion and morality, we are told by our primitive historians, were independent in their origins, and in the earlier stages of their development, and though in the dark ages popular morality could only be aroused by religious motives, and enforced by religious sanctions, the alliance, we are assured, was, after all, but an unholy one; and the time is coming, as for enlightened minds it has already come, when conduct is to reassert its freedom from religious inference, and its native superiority to religious hope and fear. And in this, as in all other ages of intellectual transition, men are liable to renounce their belief in the old order prematurely, before they have attained a confident conviction of the new. In the practical affairs of life we are awake to the danger of such a proceeding; a mountaineer does not leave his hand-hold till his foot-hold is secure; a man of business does not retire till he has provided for his future; an unjust steward is wise enough to falsify his accounts before his dismissal. But in the far deeper regions of the political, the moral, the spiritual life, all this

is too often reversed, and men let go with a strange improvidence their hold upon convictions, which, however inadequate, have been powerfully real in the past, only to clutch at empty nothingness and die shattered in the abyss.

The question, therefore, of the relation between Christianity and moral conduct is for all who profess and call themselves, in any sense of the word, Christians, far more fundamental, and, at the present moment, far more vitally important than any of the minor anxieties which now exercise the religious world. Men only forget that this is so, because they are at present in possession of a body of moral rules and principles, which have come to be regarded as axiomatic, and for daily purposes practically complete. But this body of morality is an inheritance from the Christian past, and the spiritual momentum of the Christian past is upon it. If we look beyond it to the ethical questions which are still unsolved, or in process of solution—for example, those which concern the laws of marriage—the moral responsibility of nations in their collective capacity—the equity of capital and labour—the limits of the rights of conscience—the moral character of intellectual assent—the degree of human authority over the animal creation, we see at once that the first principles upon which these questions are being discussed are often strangely at variance with those upon which the body of our morality has been established; and capable, if granted, of acting retrospectively and of disintegrating the very moral axioms of the past. In view, therefore, of this chaos, and of the havoc which its contemplation is now working in countless individual souls, we must not forget that Christianity has a moral system of its own, which claims to have the same relation to what may be called 'natural ethics' that Revelation has to 'natural religion' or 'natural theology,' and that

> 'We needs must love the highest when we see it.'

The fact that in the earlier ages of human evolution, religion and morality were often entirely apart, and that their primitive severance has left its traces upon Hebrew as on other history, is no way inconsistent with the Christian belief that in and by the Incarnation they were once and for all time united, and a new species thereby developed in the spiritual world

> 'All tended to mankind,
> And, man produced, all has its end thus far.
> But incompleted man begins anew
> A tendency to God. Prognostics told
> Man's near approach; so in man's self arise
> August anticipations, symbols, types
> Of a dim splendour ever on before
> In that eternal circle life pursues.'

And our wider modern views of history do, therefore, but lay increasing emphasis upon the old speculation of the Franciscan theologians, who regarded the Incarnation as being, independently of its other aspects, the predestined, and, therefore, natural consummation of our race; the birth of 'a new creature' by the one act, as we might now phrase it, of creative evolution, which has been done before the eyes of men. Throughout pre-Christian civilisation the philosophic few either ignored religion or, dying, dallied with it doubtfully, and failed, therefore, to carry their high morality home to the hearts of men; while the masses strove to shelter their laxity of conduct under the shadow of some more or less immoral superstition; and the essential novelty of Christianity, when viewed from the side of human history, was its predestination of a new life, in which creed and conduct were intimately, indissolubly, necessarily one. The Sermon on the Mount is often regarded as merely a code of morality, which may be isolated with advantage from the metaphysics of the Christian creed. But if we regard the Sermon on the Mount as merely a moral code, we are at once struck by its intense, its impracticable idealism.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out,' 'Resist not evil,' 'Give to him that asketh of thee,' 'Love your enemies,' 'Take no thought for the morrow,' 'Judge not,' 'Be ye perfect.' These and the like commandments, however much they may have been anticipated in India, or practised by Essene recluses, or thought out independently by Stoics here and there, are in too defiant contradiction of the apparent laws of social progress ever to have commanded the assent of the most practical portion of our race, except in the conscious assurance of a superhuman law under the human paradox, a divine power under the human will. And it is to this assurance that the whole of the Sermon on the Mount appeals. 'Let your light shine before men . . . that they may glorify your Father,' 'Love your enemies . . . that ye may be the children of your Father,' 'Pray to thy Father which seeth in secret,' 'Take no thought for your life . . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need,' 'When ye pray, say, Our Father,' 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father.' The existence of a Divine Father, and our capacity for communion with Him, is the necessary postulate and presupposition of the Sermon on the Mount. And this fact at once characterises the Christian system as one of 'absolute morality.' 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father is perfect.' It puts before us an absolutely perfect Being as the ultimate standard for our conduct, condemning us by that very fact to be, 'when we have done all, unprofitable servants,' but consecrating all our ideal aspirations, by assuring us that they are not the mere mental fringes of our

experience, as it fades into unknown space, but justifiable appropriations by anticipation of a reality now outside us, but in time destined to be ours. 'Brethren, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.'

But a speculative knowledge of the absolute is, we know, impossible to us, for 'no man hath seen God at any time.' What is possible is an inductive knowledge through experience, and it is to such knowledge that we are pointed in the Sermon on the Mount. 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.' 'Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, shall He not much more clothe you?' 'He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?' It is to the laws of nature and of human character that we are here referred for our knowledge of God; and no scientific distinction can be drawn between these two sources of information. The superficial plausibility of the criticism which accepts the notions of God which are derived from the laws of nature as being scientific, and rejects those which are derived from the laws of human character as being anthropomorphic, is solely due to the interfering presence of sin in the latter case, 'Ye being evil.' But the presence of sin does not vitiate, it only obscures the evidence; and when once in human history there had appeared a character in which could be found no fault, it became thenceforward and for ever strictly scientific to derive notions of God from that human personality, which is the highest object within present experience, and to conclude that our Father which is in heaven, however much, in the language of the day, He may transcend personality, must yet, at least, be as much as personal, and therefore be more adequately represented in the mind of Christ than in the laws which govern the inanimate creation—as man is above the sunrise, and the fowls of the air, and the lilies of the field. 'No man hath seen God at any time'. . . . 'the only begotten Son, He hath declared Him.' 'Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.'

Christianity, therefore, not only provides us with an absolute end for conduct which, as being real, makes our moral ideas speculatively justifiable, but it provides us with an adequate knowledge of that end in the teaching and character and life and death of Jesus Christ;

that is, with a standard for conduct which, as having been realised in human history, makes our moral ideals practically possible. If the Sermon on the Mount had been and remained a code of ethics, written upon tables of stone, it might have been liable to the charges of inadequacy and of exaggeration which have been so often brought against it. But it is part of a whole, and needs the interpretation of its Author's life to be taken with it. Its Author lived it to the bitter end—loving, resisting not evil, exceeding the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, taking no thought for the morrow, judging no man, and accepting the logical conclusion of His own intense moral idealism—scorn, solitude, the Cross. No; in the face of the life of Jesus Christ, it is wilful perversity to call the Sermon on the Mount exaggerated. In the face of the fruits of His death, it is impossible to call it inadequate; or to deny that the gradual amelioration of our servile, our domestic, our social, our political, our intellectual, our moral life was all contained by implication in the precept, 'Be ye perfect,' and has been wrought out under the influence of the Christian faith, in obedience to the Christian sanction.

For beside its end and its standard, Christianity has a sanction of its own: 'That ye may be the children of your Father'; 'And your Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward you openly.' We have outgrown the form of religious utilitarianism which attempted to enforce morality by an acute sense of benefits to come; but we have not yet outlived the discredit into which that system dragged the religious sanction, and which gave rise to the popular modern fallacy that ethics and religion are best apart.

But for the Christian this separation is impossible. Of course there may be many subordinate sanctions—political, physical, or other—obliging us to this or that particular action or forbearance; precisely as there may be minor maxims under the general precept of perfection. But all these derive their authority from, and in case of conflict must be corrected by, the ultimate Christian sanction, union, communion, fellowship with the Father through the Son—an eternally present relationship, into which temporal distinctions do not enter. 'He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.'

It is legitimate and in some cases necessary to awaken an enlightened imagination by presenting this sanction, under the forms of space and time, and appealing to the present and future consequences of moral evil, in order to force its intrinsic malignity into clearer relief; but in doing so we must remember that the consequences do not constitute, but only exhibit, the true nature of the evil, which consists essentially in our present separation from the Source of Life. 'He

that hath not the Son hath not life.' And here extra-Christian criticism meets us with the objection: Why appeal, in so vitally practical a matter, to a sanction which is mystical, and if not unreal, at least beyond the reach of experimental verification? We answer, Because that sanction has been verified in history as the only adequate motive of the hearts and wills of men. Aristotle knew well the limitations of natural ethics, when he prefaced his great treatise with the mournful admission that it was useless for the young in years or in character—useless for all upon whom the hope of the future rested—useless to stem the lawless passions which were already hurrying Greece to that last chapter of its history which was written by S. Paul. Jesus Christ was not less experienced in human character, when He said, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Secure in the power of His love to give the victory throughout the ages to the child-like spirit, that alone can out of weakness be made strong. Ethics are nothing if not practical, and all the ethical systems of antiquity failed simply and solely for lack of a motive force. They did what they could, the philosophers, the law, and the prophets. They were necessary stages in the evolution of morality, at sundry times and in divers manners, till in the fulness of time Christ came, not to destroy, but to fulfil. Thenceforward religion and morality became, as we have seen, identified in the belief that the ultimate end of conduct is union with the Father through the Son, and therefore necessitates the co-operation of His Spirit from above. That is the third essential of the Christian system of ethics—the belief in a Spirit, permanently present in the world, convincing it of sin, of righteousness, of judgment; interpreting the example and continuing the work of the Incarnation, in the individual and in the race. 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth . . . for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.' And this doctrine of the Spirit is the Christian answer to the vexed question of the nature and origin of the moral faculty. We are familiar with the many efforts that have been made to defend the absolute character of morality, in face of the experiential philosophy, by postulating, under one name or other, a unique moral faculty; and of the plausible attempts of modern science to analyse that faculty into elements which are not moral. But to the Christian moralist the question is unessential; for he rests not on our power to apprehend the absolute, but on the power of the absolute to comprehend us. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' And though such spiritual influence is beyond speculative explanation, it

is as open to inductive verification as any other of the ultimate laws of science, which are only known by their effects. Look at the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—as it has been shown through eighteen centuries in the lives of individual Christians, and through their lives in the customs and laws and institutions of society, modifying and moulding them, by gradual development, into closer harmony with the law of love which is 'the mind of Christ'; and remember that man cannot gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles.

Christianity therefore confronts the modern world with the claim to possess an ethical system which gathered up into itself and fulfilled all that was true in bygone philosophers or prophets, which has led us to the moral level upon which now we stand, and which is capable of infinite development in time to come, till the law of love is at length realised, and we all attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. But this claim rests entirely upon the strength of the combination between the Christian conduct and the Christian creed. That combination made possible what, without it, had been found impossible; and we have yet to learn that any modern extra-Christian system can succeed where Moses and the prophets, where Plato and Aristotle, failed. Of course, in the lapse of ages, much that is non-essential has slowly grown incorporate both in conduct and in creed. The moral law of love must of necessity embody itself in subordinate moral maxims, to meet new cases as they arise; and the faith of Christ must of necessity clothe itself in formulæ borrowed from, and limited by, the language of their age. And every generation of men, in its weary yearning after rest, strives to invest its own maxims and formulæ with an impossible finality, and to see in all that would surpass them, not fulfilment, but destruction. Now as ever, therefore, there is work for Christian philosophers and prophets; to follow the example of the Sermon on the Mount in distinguishing between letter and spirit, accident and essence.

> 'Faith in the thing, grown faith in the report,
> Whence need to bravely disbelieve report—
> Through increased faith in thing reports belie?
> . . . . . .
> Correct the portrait by the living face,
> Man's God, by God's God in the mind of man.'

This is a work of increasing delicacy and difficulty, in a complex age like ours, when both in opinion and practice good and evil are often inextricably, indistinguishably interwoven, and a work not less certain now than of old to reward its workers with the benediction of being persecuted falsely; but it is a necessary work, if the dependence of morality upon Christianity is to be maintained. For 'develop-

ment' is the phrase of the day, and we measure the vitality of an organisation by its power of adapting itself to new conditions, expanding in new atmospheres, appropriating, assimilating, utilising new customs and ideas, evolving new capacities from within, to answer each new call upon it from without. The moral system of Christianity has possessed this power in the past, and claims to possess it for the future, in a far more adequate degree than any of the secular systems which have grown up and flourished in the shadow of it, and embodied in their various watchwords of liberty, or utility, or happiness, or sacrifice, or self-development, partial and imperfect expressions of the perfect law of love. But this morality, as we have seen, is what it is simply and solely in virtue of its union with a faith which has also proved its own vitality by permanent persistence, under varying and opposite conditions of persecution and of patronage, of ignorant and enlightened ages, of antagonistic forms of government, and forms of society, and forms of thought; and is no less capable now than ever of bringing forth things new and old, and becoming all things to all men.

The distinction therefore of spirit from letter, both in morality and creed, necessary as it is at all times, is, if possible, more necessary now; for it justifies, in the region of theory, the claim of Christianity to an eternal interest and influence in the evolution of our race; and by clearing its central verities from the battle-cloud of ages, it strengthens the force of our insistence upon the practical necessity of refusing to separate morality, not only in the pulpit, but whensoever and wheresoever, and under what name soever it is taught at all, from the faith which has alone been able to give it might and meaning in the past.

The increasing pressure of the struggle for material existence in which the masses of men are now engaged threatens in the future to make pause for independent thought more and more impossible. Yet none the less the eternal issues of spiritual life and death are being invisibly fought out behind the chaos of the earthly conflict. There is need therefore now, if ever, to point men to the Sermon on the Mount, with all its infinite unworldliness of precept and of promise, and to ask them, as they hurry by us in their struggle for success, 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'

J. R. ILLINGWORTH.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Brethren and the Brotherhood.

Love the brotherhood. 1 S. Peter ii. 17.

HERE is a great difference between loving the brethren and loving the brotherhood. S. Peter, writing his first epistle, commends his Christian disciples in the first chapter because they love the brethren; in the second chapter he exhorts them to love the brotherhood. The brotherhood is the society of the brethren. The brotherhood is the Church.

One of the notable contrasts between the Apostles S. Peter and S. Paul, and their successors, the popes, the prelates, and the presbyters, is their attitude toward the Church. The New Testament takes but little account of institutions. So indefinite is the New Testament record of the discipline, the worship, and the government of the apostolic company of Christians that the Romanist, the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Baptist can each say, 'My way is the old way'; and each one can support his claim by excellent arguments out of the same Scriptures. The truth is, that nobody knows what the old way was. It is as lost as the old table and the old chairs in the upper room in which the Church began. Just how S. Paul set things in order at Corinth, no man can say. Probably S. Paul was guided on that occasion, and on most other occasions, by the principle of opportunism. He did that which the opportunity demanded. He was a great deal more concerned with getting the truths of the Christian religion into the hearts and lives of men than he was with any particular way of doing it. Any way to help men! Any way to save the souls of men! S. Paul cared more for the brethren than he did for the brotherhood.

On the other hand, there were some people in Jerusalem, as there have been a great many people in a great many places since, who seemed to think that men ought to be helped only in the one old way. Whoever would be saved must keep the law of Moses. Really, I suppose they believed that nothing else would effectually help men. They laid such emphasis, however, on the old way that the supreme purpose of religion seemed to be not so much to make people better as to make them better by a particular process.

Nobody had any business to be good in any other way. To bring in any new method was to endanger the whole system of religion. These people wanted to furnish the chancels of all the Christian churches with a table and a set of chairs made exactly like those which had stood at Pentecost on the floor of the upper room. They were against any man who suggested that, although that furniture answered excellently for Jerusalem, something else might do better for Alexandria or Rome. These people insisted that all 'fishers of men' ought to use the same sort of bait and tackle that was used in the year one. S. Paul must fish at Athens just as S. Peter fished at Capernaum. The methods of the Lake of Galilee must be the methods of the Mediterranean. This way of looking at things set the emphasis upon the old precedents, attributed great importance to the established customs of the Christian society, elevated the brotherhood over the brethren.

These two ideas about religion have contended from the beginning.

I. You remember how the Apostles found a man one day who was doing their work, and doing it more successfully than they were, but not according to their method. This man followed not with them. He loved the brethren, he loved every brother in the street. He wanted to help all who needed help, and he did help them in the name of Jesus. But for some reason he seems not to have loved the brotherhood. He had no connection with the brotherhood. And the brotherhood did not like that. They forbade the man. They said that all that good work of casting out devils in the Master's name belonged to them. That was the brotherhood's business. They put a stop to that beneficent ministry. They were quite willing to let the brethren go on being vexed with devils, for the sake of the brotherhood.

It was about this matter that dissension arose in the days of the Apostles between the Jewish and the Gentile converts. The Jews were not willing to relax the regulations of the religious society to meet the new conditions. Instead of going out with hands extended to welcome every Gentile brother who desired to take Christ for his teacher, they stayed back, reflecting that such an invitation would be inconsistent with the customs of the brotherhood. And when S. Paul and S. Peter received these brethren, and brought them by a new way into the brotherhood, and men began to become Christians without ever being Jews at all, these conservative people were indignant. S. Peter lost the presidency of the Church at Jerusalem; S. Paul was complained about, called a heretic, hindered in his work, and persecuted. This was the first Christian controversy. It was the occasion of the calling of the first Christian council. That was what they talked about there at Jerusalem: should their first care

be about the brotherhood—that is, about the keeping of the old customs? or should their first care be about the brethren—that is, about the saving of the souls of all men in any way?

II. The question was decided at Jerusalem in favour of the brethren. The mind of the Apostolic Church, as then expressed, was for setting the salvation of the individual above the preservation of any ancient custom. It was settled that the brotherhood existed for the brethren, not the brethren for the brotherhood. Nevertheless the thought of the Church for centuries ran in the other channel. The great work was the building of an institution, the strengthening and elaborating of an ecclesiastical organisation. To erect stupendous buildings, to maintain a splendid ceremonial, to gain money, and to get power, were the undertakings which largely occupied the mediæval churchmen. Then came the Reformation. The Reformation was that old Jerusalem council over again. The question once more came up for settlement—which is the more important, the soul or the Church, the brethren or the brotherhood? The supreme purpose of the Reformation was to readjust the broken balance. They took away the emphasis from the federal idea in religion, and set it on the individual idea. They taught that the soul of one man is worth more than all the ecclesiastical organisations in the world. Perish the brotherhood if it hinder the brethren!

The Reformation, however, was not by any means an unqualified success. That, indeed, could hardly be expected. The Reformation was a reaction, and a reaction is a fall from one extreme to another. It is an endeavour to get a more accurate measure by taking all the weights out of one side of the scale and putting them on the other. The immediate result of the Reformation was anarchy. The brethren were now in the ascendant; the old brotherhood was abandoned; every brother did what was right in his own eyes. The world was filled with confusion. A hundred strange doctrines followed the unguided readings of untrained theologians in the pages of the Bible, and a hundred fanatical sects arose to represent them. Every man who even fancied that he had discovered a new truth got his friends and his neighbours together, and formed as many of them as he could persuade to follow him into a new 'church.'

Along with this went, in some places, a forsaking of the Ten Commandments, and in other places a rejection of the Christian creed. Men proposed to have no authority over them whatever. The standard of faith, the standard of morals, was to be anew constructed by every individual out of the Bible. All the old traditions, the old ways, the old interpretations were to go for nothing. The Christian religion had been asleep or dead for sixteen hundred years. And now every man was an apostle. The old despotism was followed

by the dismemberment of Christendom: the old superstition was followed by the new scepticism. And these evils continue to the present day.

Thus the Christian world was divided, and is divided still, into two opposing camps, Protestant and Catholic, each of them representing one of these contending ideas of religion. The underlying principle of Protestantism is the exaltation of the brethren above the brotherhood; the underlying principle of Catholicism is the exaltation of the brotherhood above the brethren.

III. Both are right and wrong. Each needs the other. The love of the brotherhood divorced from the love of the brethren will always lead to superstition, to an undue reverence for form and custom, to some sort of tyranny. The love of the brethren separated from the love of the brotherhood will always minister to foolish divisions, to confusion of faith, to ecclesiastical anarchy. Catholicism is not the right religion; Protestantism is not the right religion. We ought to be Catholic Protestants and Protestant Catholics. We ought never to be satisfied until we are just as Protestant and just as Catholic as S. Peter and S. Paul. S. Peter, who said, 'Love the brotherhood,' said also, 'Love as brethren.' S. Paul, whose characteristic doctrine of justification by faith is the great doctrine in the Protestant creed, had more to say than any other New Testament writer about the Church.

We ought to love the brethren. Religion is for men. The mission of the Church is to help everybody who needs help. There is constant need of humanising the work of the Church, that is, of emphasising the supreme purpose for which the Church exists—to make the world better. The test of any method, of any custom in the Church, is not its age, but its actual usefulness. That ministry, for example, is a valid ministry which succeeds in saving souls. That organisation is the best which can show the best results. In the Church, as everywhere else, the proof of the tree is in the fruit. We ought to welcome every innovation, every new idea, in proportion to its attractive influence. The Church is meant to bring the life of Jesus Christ to the knowledge of every man in the world. The Church is set to teach the great truths that He taught, and to get all people to believe them. Every endeavour to make that life more real and that truth more true to men has a right place in the Church. The Church ought to be big enough to take in all the brethren. There ought to be no need for anybody who loves the Lord Jesus Christ and wants to lead others into the light of that love, to go out of the Church to do it. Somehow, in the great reunited Church of the future, every sort of worship, every variety of ecclesiastical organisation, every kind of method, every kind of man,

will have a place. There will be room in it for the mistaken people. There will be room in it for the men of one idea. There will be room in it for all the brethren, and for all who love the brethren. The only ones who will have to stay out will be those who are not good enough Christians to tolerate differences. In the Church of the future, in which men will care more for souls than they will for systems, and in which the love and service of the Lord Jesus Christ will be the beginning and the middle and the end of religion, there will be a great deal of affirmation, but a great scarcity of negation. People will be content to set forth what they actually believe, without pronouncing condemnation on those who believe other than that. There will be no effort to force faith. There will be such thorough confidence in the divinity of truth that truth will be left to prevail in its own way and in its own time, without the assistance of intolerance.

On the other hand, while we ought to love the brethren, we ought also to love the brotherhood. It is Christ Himself who directs us to hear the Church. The customs of the ancient society, the ways of the Church, ought not to be readily laid aside. The probability is that the brotherhood is wiser than any of the brethren. The established order is the growth of long experience. It is the result of dealing for centuries with human nature. These ways have been found helpful. They have been tried and proved. The chances are that they are the best ways that can be discovered. Welcome, indeed, all new ways, if they are better ways. Let us not be so committed to a system as to deny all possibility of betterment. To get a good work done is what we want, not to get it done in any particular way, even the most venerable. Nevertheless, until the new has shown its superiority, the old is better.

We ought to be loyal to the Church. We ought, as S. Peter says, to love the Church. The customs of the Church ought to be as dear to us as the customs of the family. We ought to try to learn all that we can about the Church, its history, its interpretations of doctrine, its ways of helping people, its place in Christendom. I am sorry for anybody who belongs to a sect, whose membership is in a little, narrow, exclusive religious society which was established for the emphasising of some one fragment of Christian doctrine, or for the sake of protesting against some old departure from the truth. I am sorry for anybody who cannot be enthusiastic about his Church, who does not honestly believe that it is the very Church itself, that Christ was the actual founder of it, and the Apostles the first ministers; and that there is room in it for the whole circumference of Christian truth, and that all Christians of all names can find in it all that is best in each of their denominational positions, and a great

deal more. Something is the matter, either with the Church or with the Christian, when the Christian does love not the Church.

GEORGE HODGE.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Sorrow and Joy.

And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. S. JOHN xvi. 22.

LET us consider from the text first, the things which would be likely to cause sorrow to the disciples, and then at the nature and source of their after joy.

I. Let us first glance at the darker, the Good Friday side of the picture. 'Ye now, therefore, have sorrow'—sorrow first because they knew He was going away, because their Master was about to be taken from their head, because they would so soon be bereft of their counsellor, guide, protector, friend; soon, and they should hear no more the gracious words that proceeded from His lips; witness no more His many wonderful works; soon, and they would have none to repair to in difficulty, none to fly to in distress, none to shelter and protect them from the world's unkindness, His presence as the shadow of a great rock, in a weary land. True, He had said to them a few verses before, 'It is expedient for you that I should go away.' But this was one of the hardest lessons He had ever taught them—to believe that the orphan would be happier for His bereavement, that the army would fight better when its Chief was gone, that disciples would be better able to cope with the world after seeing their Master given over to its power. This was a hard saying; their faith had not risen to any adequate conception of the mighty influence which was to be to them as an indwelling Christ, a Master at hand always, to guide and to comfort, to uphold, to bless. They could think of nothing but the coming separation, of what lone things they should be in this great world when Christ was gone. And perhaps they would think (as the approaching end of every dear friend makes us all think), of the many instances in which there had been a want of kindness, and affection, and duty—selfish things, unkind things, inconsiderate things, what would we give if we could recall them now. We never had loved our friend enough,

never requited His goodness to us as we ought, and now that He is going away we feel all this deeply. So would reason these disciples. They had been proud, they had been factious, they had been hankering after the world's great things; they had partaken grudgingly of their Master's Cross, and cup, and persecution, and contumely, and shame. And they know that these things had gone to His heart, had been to Him as wounds before His time—wounds received too in the house of His friends; bitter remembrance this for the eleven, and one that would come back with a terrible freshness as they saw the parting hour approaching. 'Ye now, therefore, have sorrow'—

Sorrow because of the declared manner of His death. If He had been about to die the common death of all men; if, young though He were, He was to be deprived of the residue of His years by pining sickness, if they could have stood by His bed and watched Him as the fastenings of the earthly tabernacle gave way, as the pale lamp of life went gradually out, and the spirit passed into the world of spirits, silently and without a struggle, this might have lightened that great sorrow. There is often a nobleness and sublimity in a good man's end, the sight of which, for the time, almost reconciles the broken heart to its loss—to see him at that moment of all moments, his faith strong, his hope bright, his views clear, his whole mind tranquil and staid, amid the tempestuous heavings of life's last scene, anchored upon the rock, to see how there is a power within him which survives nature's power which grows with weakness, is renewed as the body wastes, gathering fresh honour upon honour's head, girding the departing spirit with the strength of immortality. Oh, it is like a store of posthumous joy laid up for us to think of that peaceful and unclouded end. But what was Christ's death to be? What had He told them it should be only a few days before? 'Then He took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated, and spit upon; and they shall scourge Him and put Him to death.' True, He had assured them on the third day He should rise again. But this saying was hid from them. They seem never to have put a distinct meaning upon it; not even its actual fulfilment could bring back the forgotten prediction to their minds; they could think of nothing but the death, its shame, its violence, its dishonour, its tendency to extinguish utterly their last hope of a temporal kingdom, and to fasten on themselves the life-long brand of having been the followers of one who was hanged upon a tree. We need not hesitate to put down selfishness as having entered very largely into

this sorrow of the disciples. It was dark, all dark, the disciples could not bear up against this: 'Ye now, therefore, have sorrow.'

II. All dark, I said, but this was not so; if the eye of faith be but strong enough to see it, God always assures us of light at eventide. 'Ye now, therefore, have sorrow,' saith the Holy Saviour, 'but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.'

How beautiful is the law of our mental constitution, which makes joy such an overruling, absorbing, past-obliterating thing! So soon as it comes the preceding suffering becomes expunged, erased from thought, blotted out as a thing which had never been. The truth has no more striking illustration than that given by our Lord Himself, based on the feelings of the maternal heart; putting the suffering, as one of memory's distant things far back, something long ago: 'She remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.' Such was to be the joy of the disciples now. That dark crucifixion scene, they remember it no more; that dreadful distressing sacrifice, they remember it no more; that burying of their best hope in the sepulchre in the garden, they remember it no more for joy that Christ had come to them again; and this is the Easter aspect of our subject: 'I will see you again.' This promise, taken in connection with the joy which was to follow, points clearly for its fulfilment to that meeting of the disciples with closed doors on the evening of the first day of the week, concerning which we are told, 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.' It is observable that our Lord lost not a moment in making known His triumphs to those whom it chiefly concerned. With the attributes and properties of His risen Body, He might have appeared to the utter confounding of His enemies in the streets of Jerusalem, might have awed the chief priests in the Temple, or have confronted Pilate on his dishonoured judgment-seat. But there were troubled disciples to be comforted, and He could brook no delay in ministering to their relief. There they were, behind those closed doors, shut up, as it were, in Doubting Castle, and under the custody of Giant Despair; full of faithless thoughts, wondering, reasoning, questioning, desponding, sad, their own Scriptures not remembered, nor yet their Master's words. But He remembered those words, and remembered how, on that one sad night, He had said unto them, 'Ye now, therefore, have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.' And His words were fulfilled; their hearts did and must rejoice on many accounts.

Thus it would rejoice them to see how kindly He had remembered them, how promptly He had come to them, and how affectionately He had met them again, for the first time, without a word

or look or gesture that had not love in it. Behind those closed doors, they were, no doubt, talking of what the women had said. By this time the testimonies had accumulated, and they must have begun to believe that their Lord was risen. But if so, how would He meet them for the first time? Would He not reproach them for their unkind desertion of Him at the approach of Judas; for their leaving Him to tread the wine-press alone; for their not returning, with one exception, to soothe the agonies of His dying; and for their leaving it to strangers' hands even to see that He had a grave? All this, I say, they might have expected, for such would be our thoughts naturally. Yes; and, therefore, not Christ's thoughts, which are higher and better far. He yearned after His brethren. Unkindness had not altered His affection for them; for, with all their shortcomings, He knew that they loved Him still. Thus He came back from the Cross with the same heart of love with which He went to it. And, therefore, when suddenly and mysteriously He appeared standing in the midst of them, His first words were not a reproach to Peter for his denial, nor a reminder to John of his flight, nor a rebuke to them all for their unbelief and slowness of heart, but one short precious sentence, hallowed to them by many a sacred and dear remembrance, 'Peace be unto you.' Oh, how would the words come back to them then! 'I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice.'

III. 'Your joy no man taketh from you,' for who should take it from them? In what did it consist but in a sight of Christ, in an assured part in the covenant, in a felt interest in the unchanging regards of Him concerning whom it is said, Whom He loveth He loveth unto the end? Yes, this was the strength of the Apostles' joy, as it must be the strength of ours. They had nothing else to depend upon. Coming to them so kindly as He did, and so soon, they saw how He could love them through all their weaknesses, and faults, and miscarriages, and sins—through the unwatchfulness of some that slept; through the cowardice of one that denied; through the inconstancy of those who fled; through the faithlessness that only a few hours before had treated as an idle tale the report of His having risen from the dead. Yes, through all this and a great deal more had Jesus loved them. They were His own. Through evil report and through good report He must keep them. Through temptations and through trials He must keep them. He had set His heart upon them, and chosen them out of the world as men whom His blood should purchase, His grace should sanctify, His omnipotence should save. 'I know My sheep, and am known of Mine.' This is their joy, and a joy which no man taketh from them.

Neither shall any man take it from you, if such a joy be yours.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

If you have had a sight of Christ, if He, by His Spirit, hath pronounced over you those soul-saving words, 'Peace be unto you'; if He have shown you His hands and His side, and you have come to see in them, pierced and smitten for your sins, your soul's ransom, your heart's peace, then your joy shall be as the disciples' joy, and like theirs shall never be taken away. The great comfort of a joy based on the antecedent love of Christ, as well as the great security for its continuance, is that it shifts the difficulties of the work, and so to speak, almost the responsibility of our salvation, upon Christ. 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine'; if Jesus hath set His love upon me, if He hath deigned to call me His own, if He hath given desires which He only excites in His people, crosses which He only lays upon His people, a joy and peace in believing which are only felt by His people, not only should your hearts rejoice, but you should feel it to be a joy which no man taketh from you. Yes, this must be our rock at all times. When we fall into a state of spiritual deadness, we must cleave to this; when we have been overtaken in a fault, in penitence and in deep shame, we must cleave to this; when God makes His face to shine upon us, we must cleave to this. It is but holding on by that by which God himself holds on by: 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be moved, but My kindness shall not depart from Jacob, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee.'

D. MOORE.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Whole Views of Life.

And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them. Thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence. NUMBERS xxiii. 13.

ANY of you will recall the story from which these words are taken, and the striking picture which it draws. The Israelites are travelling through the desert. They are approaching the domain of Balak, king of Moab. Balak is frightened, and sends for the Mesopotamian wizard, Balaam, and bids him curse the dangerous intruders. But Balaam, filled with a higher spirit than he understands, blesses instead of cursing. Again the effort is made, and the disappointment follows in another place. And then it is that there

occurs to the monarch the idea which is recorded in the text. Perhaps if the prophet did not see the whole host in its multitude the curse would come more readily. 'Let us stand where we can only see a part of them,' he says. 'Peradventure thou canst curse me them from thence.'

It was a vain expedient. The blessing came still pouring forth more richly than before. Why should it not? It was not the quantity but the quality of Israel which drew the blessing. It was not because there were so many of them, but because they were set on lofty purposes and carried in their bosom mighty spiritual issues, that God took care of them and made them strong. It was a hopeless hope of Balak. And it was like a child. It was the transparent self-cheat of infancy. So children play with themselves and one another, saying, 'Let us see only a part and make believe that that is all.'

I. It is a beautiful and noble faith when a man believes in the absolute truth, unfound, unfindable perhaps by man, and yet surely existent behind and at the heart of everything. It is a terrible thing when a man ceases to believe in it, and ceases to seek for it. He sinks out of the highest delight and purity. For him the great glory of life is gone. Petty and selfish economies sweep in and overwhelm him. Not what is true, but what will tell for the advantage of something which he thinks valuable, becomes the object of his search. He questions everything, as the lawyer questions a witness, in the interest of a cause. Then comes the Balak folly. Then the man shuts his eyes to everything which will not tell upon his side. Then he refuses to look upon the whole of things, and sees only the portion which will minister to his passion or his spite.

II. Upon the dark places of partial vision I know that I should never find the great Seer of human life, who is Christ. Christ saw all life in God. That means that He saw life in its completeness. No being ever saw the evil and misery as He beheld it. He saw sin with all the intensity of holiness. But nobody ever has dared call Jesus Christ a pessimist. He saw the end from the beginning. He saw the depth from the surface. He saw the light from the darkness. He saw the whole from the parts. Therefore He could not despair. There was no curse of life upon His lips. Infinite pity! A pity that has folded itself around the world's torn and bleeding heart like a benediction ever since—but no curse! And who are we, with our little feeble rage and petulance, flinging our testy curses where the Lord's blessing descended like the love of God? Oh, if you ever find yourself cursing life, get your New Testament and read what Jesus said looking down on Jerusalem from the height of the Mount of Olives, looking down on man from the measureless height of the Cross!

III. I must do little more than allude to the one other application of our truth which is in my mind; but I must not let you go without alluding to it. It is the saddest and most terrible of all. I am thinking of the desperation and bitterness which come with the sight of pain without the sight of the higher consequences and results of pain. It is the old tragedy of the Book of Job, and of the books of thousands of tortured lives. 'Curse God and die' seems sometimes to be the only outcome of it all. Perhaps, nay almost certainly, there are some to whom it seems so this morning. It is the only outcome of it all, if the pain you feel or see is all. But if the whole of a man's life from its beginning to its endless end, from its surface in to its inmost heart, is capable of being taken into account, then that desperate outcome is not the only one. There is a blessing and a thankfulness which may overcome and drown the curse. Suppose that, looking at pain, and with the curse just growing into shape upon your lips, a great hand takes you up and lifts you. And as you rise your vision widens. And slowly education grows into your view, surrounding pain, and drawing out its sense of cruelty, and crowding in upon it its own sense of love and purpose. Then, in the larger vision, must not the curse perish? And if the lips are not strong enough to open into thankfulness, at least the eyes, still full of pity, may wait in peace.

This is the fear we have to-day. The sense of human pain grows stronger all the time. And it sometimes seems as if the sense of purpose and education grew weaker in a multitude of souls. It is the heart of man taken, Balaam-like, to a place whence it can see the part and not the whole; and who that listens does not hear the muttering of the curse? Where is the help, first for your soul, then for the whole great world? Not in saying that pain is not pain, not in shutting the eyes to the part which is so awfully manifest, but seeing, in insisting upon seeing, the whole.

> 'To feel, although no tongue can prove,
> That every cloud that spreads above,
> And veileth love, itself is love.'

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

The Two Ways of seeing Christ.

A little while, and ye shall see me no more. S. JOHN xvi. 19.

I. 'A LITTLE while, and ye shall see me no more' (the best MSS. have *οὐκέτι* for *οὐκ*). 'Ye shall see' here is *θεωρεῖτε*, the verb *θεωρεῖν* strictly refers to physical sight, and *θεωροί* are

spectators. In this sense after our Lord's death they could no more see Him thus (except when He willed thus to manifest Himself). 'And again, a little while, and ye shall see Me.' Here the 'little while' refers to the day of Pentecost, and the consequent gift of the Holy Spirit, which should enable them to see Him after a new manner, the words 'ye shall see' are ὄψεσθε, and here the verb ὁρᾶν refers to spiritual perception, to that sight which they should have through the power of the Holy Ghost, which, while it was different altogether in kind, was also greater in that it extended to an apprehension of Christ, which they could not have then, and which should grow until it found its full consummation in the Beatific Vision in eternity.

II. But the words have their application to us also, and are especially appropriate for Easter thoughts.

We, too, like the Apostles, begin by seeing Christ only in an inferior way as spectators of His life, as recorded in the gospels. We read of Him, and with more or less distinctness bring before us the events of His life, as we might the history of any great man. We learn many interesting facts about Him, what He said and did, in a word, we begin by *knowing about* Christ. But our Lord says, 'In a little while ye shall see Me.' Not with this mere natural knowledge, but by the gift of spiritual sight, and if we have this sight and are using it, we pass from knowing *about* Christ to knowing Him personally, experimentally, as our Lord, and Saviour, and All.

This sight is exercised and deepened by the practice of meditation, and Easter calls us to look beyond the grave, to see Him in His glorified life.

III. These two kinds of sight are more clearly distinguished when we recall that our Lord said, 'The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth (θεωρεῖ) Him not' (S. John xiv. 17). Here again we have the first kind of sight, physical sight; the world seeth not the Spirit, because it has only natural sight, and He cannot make Himself visible to the mere eyes of nature.

We have the eyes of the Spirit. Are we using them? Are we developing them? It is true of spiritual faculties as well as natural, that while they are developed by exercise, they become atrophied by disuse.

And true it is that some never see spiritual things, because they never cultivate any other sight than that of nature. How many need to cry with the blind man, 'Lord, that I might receive my sight' (S. Mark x. 51).

Does Easter mean for us anything more than a cessation of Lenten penitence? Does it mean a life hid with Christ in God? a glorious vision of a world beyond? REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

A Study of Temptation.

And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned. NUMBERS xxii. 34.

BALAAM proceeds on his evil way, the slave of his besetting sin: he is bent on earning Balak's house full of silver and gold, and being promoted to great honour. He seeks for enchantments, he tries to elicit the curses of the demons; if he cannot bend the immortals, he will move hell from beneath. It is in vain. Against his will he is forced to break into that unparalleled series of prophecies in all their rhythmic grandeur, and to Balak's complaint he can only answer, 'How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed, and how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?' And then, as with a deep sigh of discontent at his own false position which yet he will not abandon, he adds, as though it were in spite of himself, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' It was thus at Bamoth-Baal, it was thus in the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah, it was thus at the top of Peor which looketh towards Jeshimon, it was thus, when abandoning all further search for demon divinations, he set his face towards the wilderness. God had blessed and he could not reverse it, till at last, when Balak's anger was kindled, with a cry he smote his hands together and bade Balaam flee to his place, no richer and no greater, but much guiltier than when he came. But how intensely significant to all except the dulness of a vulgar and a shallow conceit is the whole of this story! The devil is always ready to bid high for the soul of a man, but he does not care to pay. The sinner finds that he has sold his soul for naught—for a crude apple or a lost paradise; for a mess of red pottage, and forty years after for the exceeding great and bitter cry; for a Babylonish garment and a wedge of gold buried beneath his tent-sod, and then, for the stoning and burning, and accursed heap in the valley of Achor; for the blessings of the evil genii which are curses in disguise. His misfeasance fruitless, unperfected, unrewarded, disappointed, discredited, Balaam rose up and went and returned to his place.

I. The death of the wicked cannot but mean a fearful looking forward, and the death of the righteous is but a step into the open air out of a tent already luminous with light which shines though its transparent folds. Now mark the sequel. Can anything be more senseless than for a man to bid God wait his leisure, to lavish upon Satan the bud and blossom, the dawn and burning noon, the rich wine mantling in life's golden cup, and never intend to reserve for God anything but life's decrepitude and decay, its ragged and muddy lees, its dim and drizzling twilight, its rotten lilies and cankered

roses? Salvation is not thrust upon us; salvation will not drop on any of us at haphazard. He whose wish it is to die the death of the righteous, if that wish be sincere, must begin now to live the life of the righteous, and how few, even of professing Christians, are in any true sense righteous, 'lest having been often reproved and hardened in his heart, he be suddenly cut off and that without remedy.'

Balaam's prayer for the death of the righteous while he makes no effort after the life of the righteous is a monstrosity. Is there not a certain and inevitable congruity between fruit and tree; can men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

II. But perhaps you think that there was an intense aggravation in the guilt of Balaam because his soul was so full of illumination. Now, the principle is true that they who are admitted into a more holy sanctuary, are guilty of a deeper sacrilege. And it is true that God had endowed this Mesopotamian sorcerer with splendid insight.

Yet the high theoretic knowledge did not drag Balaam back from the shameful, practical apostasy, and what will it avail us? Have we not ten times the knowledge of Balaam, and in tenfold fulness and clearness the sceptre and the star which Balaam saw afar off? Have not we beheld them day and night?

No man ever sinned without being well aware that the sin was a sin, and the punishment is but sin taken a little lower down the stream.

III. And so observe the two short notices which sum up all the rest that we know of Balaam's career. They give us the inevitable *dénouement* of the terrible tragedy. How many a criminal has felt the anguish of the scourge and the horror of the prison, and yet has only been set free from them to violate the law again, returning like a dog to his vomit and like a sow that has been washed to her wallowing in the mire! And so it was with Balaam. A man does not get rid of his sin if he does not struggle against it, and not easily even then. Balaam had gone back to his people, but he was still uncured of his hankering for gold; he was once more tempted to place his glorious powers and his execrable services at the disposal of the king of Moab. Divinations, enchantments, curses have proved in vain, now he would have recourse to an implement of destruction far more devilish and far more terribly effectual. Then came the end. Balaam's sin found him out, as sin always does. The due reward of the works was given him. The death of the righteous was not destined for this corrupted traitor, for this apostate seer. It might have been even if he had turned back at the first terrific warning, but how could he expect the death of the righteous in this world who had sown corruption broadcast into the souls and pestilence in the bodies of men? And how did he die? Listen! 'And the children of

Israel warred against the Moabites and they slew the kings of Moab, besides the rest of them that were slain; Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.' Not with the righteous, but fighting among the enemies of God; not in honoured age, happy with children's voices round his bed, but in the red front of guilty strife.

For the sake of a handful of paltry dross he had sold his eternal jewel to the enemy of man, and he had earned the dreadful two-fold epitaph which the New Testament inscribes with ceremonious reprobation upon his name. One epitaph is 'Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.' The other is, 'Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.' Life is a very serious thing, even for triflers. 'The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!'

DEAN FARRAR.

Balaam.

And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you. . . . And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. NUMBERS xxii. 13-21.

BALAAM is one of the most interesting characters in the Bible; and it is a special feature of the Bible that it exhibits real living human characters. If ever you come to read the sacred books of other religions—for example, the Koran, which is the Bible, as you know, of the great Mohammedan Faith—you will find plenty of moral and ceremonial rules, nay, a good many precepts which you will do well to incorporate in your own Christianity; but you will not be passing, as it were, though a portrait gallery of living men and women, whom you know well. Yet there is certainly no means so efficacious of teaching spiritual or moral truth as by example.

It is the divine mode to teach by example; and, bearing this in mind, as the result of many instances, let me ask, What is the lesson of Balaam's life?

I. Now, when the messengers of Balak came to Balaam and asked him to do something which he knew to be wrong, he said, 'No, I cannot go with you.' That seems at first a very noble answer. But you know there is a way of saying No which means Yes, and I am much afraid that that was Balaam's way. If you look a man in the face and say I won't, that is one thing; but it is another thing (is it not?) if you halt and hesitate, and let your No come stammering out

as if you were ashamed of it. Balaam began by wanting to please God. He said, and probably he was at least half honest in saying, 'If Balak would give me his house full of gold and silver, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, my God, to do less or more.' Yet he wanted to please himself at the same time. He asked God again if he might not go. He kept trying to curse the people, although he could not; and when he could not curse them, he tempted them to sin. What was the good of his saying, 'Let me die the death of the righteous,' when the only possible way of dying as the righteous die (and this is a lesson which belongs to you as much as to him) is to live as the righteous live? And so he went from good to bad, and from bad to worse, until, as S. Peter says, he became a perpetual instance of the ruin wrought in a highly-gifted human soul by 'loving' not God only, but 'the wages of unrighteousness.'

II. Now, what was Balaam's prime mistake? I think it was this, that he trifled with his conscience. At first, when the princes of Moab asked him to go with them, he knew perfectly well that it was wrong. Probably, if he had spoken out like a man, they would never have asked him again. But he began saying to himself, 'What a pity that I should lose all this money! Might not I go? Might not I just try again if God will let me go? What does it matter, if it is a little wrong? How do I know that anything worse will ever come of it?' Ah! but this is just what it is so fatal to say. God speaks once to the human soul, and speaks loudly; but if you disobey His voice, it soons sinks to a whisper.

Follow your conscience, and it shall lead you to God. Believe me, the only way to get more spiritual light is to live according to the light you have. It may only be a light that breaks athwart the darkness; make the most of it, and some day you shall have more. There may be hereafter only one duty which is clear to you, only one friend or kinsman whom you can help, only one boy whom you can keep from evil, only one piece of work which you alone can do. Well, do that. Try to accomplish that one object. Try to save just that one human soul. Gradually, it may be after many a day, the clouds will break. You will know more of God's will. He will seem nearer to you. His voice will sound more clearly in your soul. You shall enter into that divine peace which the world may neither give nor take away.

J. E. C. WELLDON.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Balaam.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.
NUMBERS xxiii. 10.

IN looking over the life of Balaam we cannot help asking, Was such an aspiration as this utterly unfitting on his lips? At first sight not so much as we should have thought. He constantly tells Balak that he could only speak what the Lord put into his mouth. He apparently puts from him the bribes of Balak: and there is one of his moral sayings which has been preserved to us by the prophet Micah, which shows the very high view indeed which he had of God's character. It appears that the idolatrous King Balak consulted the prophet as to how God was to be worshipped. 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the Most High God? . . . Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams and with ten thousands of rivers of oil; shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' To this the prophet replies, 'What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' Surely it was no hypocrisy in such a man to pray, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' And yet this prayer was utterly inconsistent with his life, and utterly inconsistent with the desires of his covetous heart. He committed the vulgarest, the grossest of all inconsistencies, of desiring to die the death whilst he was not living the life of the righteous.

Now the death of the righteous is the termination of a righteous life. There is nothing in the death itself, in its circumstances, to make us pray that we may die such a death; for the death of the righteous may be by a lingering and painful disease, or it may be by cruel torture, by the rack, or by fire, or by wild beasts, as were the deaths of the martyrs. For a man, then, to pray that he may die the death, and of course, by it enter into the heaven of the righteous, whilst he is not diligently preparing for it, is really as absurd as for a man to think that he may win a race without running it, or that he may conquer in a battle without fighting it, or that he may reap a harvest without sowing it.

What then are our prayers? What are our lives? And how do the prayers correspond with the lives? M. F. SADLER.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Jesus Only.

And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.
S. Matthew xvii. 8.

HE three Evangelists who have recorded that stupendous event, the Transfiguration of our blessed Lord, tell us that when all was over—when the voice of the Almighty, speaking in human accents, heard by human ears, had ceased, and when the overshadowing cloud had passed away, the three disciples, who had fallen to the earth in terror, arose, and, looking round, saw no man 'save Jesus only!'

Thus simply, and in very few words, do the sacred writers describe a scene which the imagination of earth's mightiest poets and painters might strive in vain to put before us. Two very simple words are those words, 'Jesus only'; but considered in connection with the event to which they belong, or even taken by themselves for meditation, they suggest many thoughts. Some of these I now wish to put before you.

I. Now, when Moses and Elias, the mysterious visitants from the spirit-world, were gone, 'Jesus only' remained. This is suggestive. In Moses we see the type of the Law; in Elias the type of the Prophets. They were gone. Even so the Law and the Prophets were for a time only. They endured for a space. When their work was done, they passed away. But in Jesus we see the type of the Gospel. Jesus only remained. For the 'Everlasting Gospel' passeth not away, but abideth ever.

II. Another thought. Moses and Elias were great men, and honourable in their generation. One, the great deliverer and lawgiver of Israel, the man of God, who, when his work was finished, and he lay down at his Master's bidding to die, was honoured with a burial at the hands of angels, whose lowly grave by Nebo's mountain no man knoweth unto this day. The other, Elias, was the greatest of the Prophets, the man who never tasted death, but was caught up in the flesh to paradise, to be 'for ever with the Lord.'

But great and mighty though they were, they were but men; they

could not endure for ever, and so they passed away from earth, and their place knew them no more.

'Jesus only' remained. For Jesus is God, 'Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,' and Jesus only will remain when heaven and earth shall pass away, and time shall be no longer.

'Jesus only.' The words are suggestive of the lives of the Apostles. They lived for Jesus only. For Him they had forsaken all. He was the sun and centre of their existence. Their teaching, their preaching, their writing, their lives, might be summed up in those two words, 'Jesus only.'

III. I commend the words to you—to be taken by you as your motto in this life—your war-cry in the world's 'broad field of battle'—and then, when life's brief day is closing and death's dark night drawing on apace, to be your passport into the life beyond.

Take them as your motto. Old families have their motto, of which they are justly proud—words which in olden days of chivalry the founder of the family chose as his watchword, and with which, engraved on crest and shield, he rode forth to do nobly for God and man. And now, in time-hallowed halls, on blood-stained banner, and on dented shield, the old words may still be traced, words that incite all true sons of the noble house to emulate the virtues of ancestors long dead.

Here, then, is a motto for you—there never was a better. The motto of the old Christian family. Great saints of God have borne it, loved it, died for it—Jesus only!

There is a password needed by souls that from the din and strife of this world would enter into the pearly gates of 'Jerusalem the Golden,' and there is but one. It is, 'Jesus only!' King and pauper, saint and sinner, must each knock there, with these words and no other, 'Jesus only!'

J. B. C. MURPHY.

A Little While.

What is this that He saith, A little while? we cannot tell what He saith.
S. JOHN xvi. 18.

I. WHAT a wonderful power there is in these words, 'A little while'! In the season of affliction, or the hour of worldly temptation, or amidst quarrels and disputes, how soothing and calming is this mysterious expression of our Lord's, 'A little while'! But a little while and all will be over; a little while, and this trouble, this joy, this passion—all this scene will have gone by.

And the epistle for to-day begins with the same lesson, although differently expressed, of our transient and fleeting condition. 'Dearly

beloved,' says S. Peter, 'I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims.' It is like our Lord's own saying, 'A little while'; for in the sight of God we are as strangers and pilgrims. 'We are strangers,' says David, 'before Thee, and sojourners.' It is before God, in His presence, as He sees things; it is our Lord's 'little while,' which men, like His disciples of old, understand not. But oh that we may come to have the mind of God on this subject, to know, as He does, that our days on earth are but a shadow that abideth not!

To all duties we must carry on the first expression of the epistle for to-day; be 'as strangers and pilgrims' upon earth, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Kingdom of God. 'As strangers and pilgrims,' says the Apostle; 'it is as such that I beseech you, my dearly beloved.' This will form a connection with the gospel for the day, which speaks under circumstances the most affecting, and language of the deepest interest and beauty, of the short period of this mortal life.

II. The occasion upon which they were spoken is familiar to us all; it was now at the Last Supper, when our Lord was taking that solemn leave of His disciples on the night before His death, and speaking in mysterious words which they could scarcely understand, of His departure from them. Jesus said to His disciples, 'A little while, and ye shall not see Me.' To the disciple who loves his Lord it is not the shortness of this life, of its business and pleasures, his own short continuance in the world, and that of all his friends that are dear to him; it is not this consideration which lies nearest to his heart, but his absence from Christ, the 'little while' during which his Lord is removed from his view. Thus S. John says, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus!' *i.e.* it is His absence that appears long to him; and S. Paul, 'I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' Thus the bereavement and sorrow of these disciples would be from not seeing their Lord; it is this which they think of with such heaviness, and therefore He says in consolation, It is but a little while that I shall be absent.

III. 'Then said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me; and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He saith, A little while? we cannot tell what He saith.'

They knew not of His disappearing for a little while in the grave, and their seeing Him so soon again; they knew not of His ascending to the Father, and after but a little while coming to be with them in the Comforter; they knew not yet of His coming again after a little while with the same Body glorified at the last day, when they should see Him as He is. But more than this; in the difficulty of

comprehension, in the questioning and inquiry among themselves respecting the little while of which He spake, seem to be represented all Christians unto the end of the world. There is nothing of which our Lord seemed to speak at various times more strongly, and to repeat more earnestly, than the shortness of the time before His return to judgment. 'The hour cometh,' He said, 'yea, even now is, when all the dead shall hear His voice.' And again, 'Surely I come quickly.' But from that time when He thus spake, unto this day, all Christians appear to be saying, 'What is this that He saith, A little while?' We feel that there is some mystery in it which we cannot understand, and that, in fact, the time is not so long as it appears to be. 'What is this that He saith, A little while,' and I shall call all men forth from their graves? 'we cannot tell what He saith.' Is it not eighteen hundred years? how is it a little while? 'It is not,' says S. Augustine, 'that the Lord delayeth His promise; a little while, and we shall see Him, at that time when we shall have no more to pray for, no more to inquire after; because nothing will remain to be desired, nothing hidden to be learned. This little while appears to us long, because it is still passing; when it shall have come to an end, then we shall perceive how it hath been for a little while.'

'And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' This was His consolatory answer and explanation to those who were desirous to ask Him what He meant by the words, 'A little while.' When He returned to them from the grave, and all things were so changed by the Resurrection, it must indeed have appeared to them but 'a little while' that He was absent, but a short season of sorrow. To us likewise He says, 'I will see you again,' it is but a short time; we cannot in any adequate sense understand His words; but when we look back on life, when we see how quickly our friends have passed away, and the days are gone by which to ourselves once appeared long, we begin to understand in some degree that Christ speaks aright, and that our thoughts, when engaged in this world, are altogether wrong, in our estimate of time.

I. WILLIAMS.

The Church and the World.

IT is not always noticed that during the whole of this season the Gospels are selected from that group of chapters in S. John's Gospel containing our Lord's discourses on the eve of the Passover, and in which very much of the more spiritual teaching of the King-

dom is embodied. He has, in the gospel for this Sunday, sketched out the permanent conditions under which His Church should exist; and indicated the sources of its permanent and abiding consolation, 'I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.'

I. The Church shall be permanently in a condition of militancy whilst it is in this world. (S. John xvi. 20.)

II. The world misuses joy, and forgets God by means of it.

1. Joy is from God, and should bring us to God, but the joy of the world takes the place of God. The world is satisfied therewith. It hurries the world off to the things of God's creation, and away from Himself.

2. Joy is for God, and should be offered to God. The faithful offer it to God by every act, both of penance and of thanksgiving. The world wants God to minister to its joy; does not wish by its joy to glorify God.

3. Joy is in God. Only in looking to God can we know the Eternal. False joy is changeable, and makes us avoid the Eternal. The changeless is wearisome when no living and true joy is yet found.

III. Yet the joy of the world can never satisfy the heart of man.

There was once a celebrated king of ancient Spain. His reign had been very long and very splendid. Before he died, he said to a particular friend one day, 'I have kept a record of all the happy days I have spent during my reign of sixty years, and in looking over that record to see how many such days I have had, I find there only'—how many do you think?—'only one!'

IV. The joy of the Christian satisfies the soul:

Because their joy is Christ, who then dieth no more.

Nor shall any end [of joy] be sufficient for us, unless Him, who has no end.

S. J. EALES.

Our Lord's Last Days on Earth.

To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs.
Acts i. 3.

OUR Lord's Resurrection.

S. Luke speaks first of the contents of his gospel. Those contents, he says, were 'all that Jesus began to do and to teach' (ver. 1). The same is the subject of the writings of the other three Evangelists, SS. Matthew, Mark, and John. Jesus, you observe, both 'did and taught.' The doctrines He taught were confirmed

by the miracles He did. Christ's true ministers are not only teachers, but also examples, to their flocks. It is not enough likewise for you who are private Christians to say, 'Lord, Lord,' you must also do what your Lord commands.

S. Luke says that his gospel narrative went on to the time when Jesus was 'taken up' (ver. 2) to heaven. Christ continued doing and teaching, to the very last, till He was removed to higher work within the veil. And was not this the case with His servant Elijah? And is it not so with all His servants? Is it not their wish to be found so doing when their Lord shall summon them to their rest?

But before the Lord Jesus departed, S. Luke informs us, He took care to 'show Himself alive after His Passion by many infallible proofs' (ver. 3). The great evidence of the truth of Christ's Resurrection was that He not only was 'alive,' but that He 'showed Himself alive,' and was so seen of the Apostles and others. What would you think, if to-day, after you left this church, you met in the streets some one who, you knew, was put in the grave last Friday? This was the marvel that happened to these disciples. Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. He appeared to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, then to Peter, then to the eleven Apostles, then to seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, then to above five hundred brethren at once, then to James, and now to all the Apostles before and at His Ascension. Nor were they deceived in what they saw. The proofs were many, and they were 'infallible proofs.' He walked with them. He talked with them. He ate with them; and He drank with them. He over and over again stated that what they saw was 'Himself and not another.' He showed them again and again the marks of the wounds in His hands and feet and side.

These proofs of His being alive were repeated during the space of forty days; and, therefore, if they doubted at all at first, as did Thomas, one of their body, they had abundant opportunity afterwards to convince themselves of the reality of His Resurrection. Now some of you may feel disposed to envy the disciples the privileges they then enjoyed of holding communion with their risen Lord. But has not that same risen Lord said, for your comfort and mine, 'Yea, rather blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed'? Although you see not the Saviour, yet you love Him; and He will manifest Himself, if not to the eyes of your body, yet certainly to the eyes of your soul, and that, too, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

But Christ did more than show Himself alive. This is our second point. Notice not only His Resurrection, but also—

II. His conversation.

Christ did not entertain His disciples with discourses on politics or on the kingdoms of men. He spake not to them of literature, or of philosophy, or of astronomy, or of the fine arts, or of herbs, or of trees, or of the kingdom of nature—good as those things are in their proper places. Oh, no! Far higher subjects filled his thoughts. His speech was touching the kingdom of grace. O how sadly, therefore, do those men waste their precious lives who can find time to discuss and examine all the wonders and beauties of creation, but who have neither inclination nor time to discuss and inquire into 'the things of the kingdom of God.'

III. His Ascension.

As soon as Jesus entered into the cloud, those standing beneath, on the Mount of Olivet, lost all sight of Him; but, if you ask what became of Him, after He entered the cloud, I can tell you; for God Himself has revealed it by His Spirit, by the mouth of the Prophet Daniel. 'I saw,' he says, 'in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before Him, and there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people and nations and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' Here you see the nature of Christ's kingdom. It is a kingdom, not for Israel only. It is a universal kingdom. This kingdom is in the hearts of His converted people, and is seen in all portions of this our world. What, too, these clouds were, we know. They were the angels of heaven, who followed the Lord Jesus, as the Lord of Hosts, the Lord mighty in battle. They were now following Him from the battlefield on earth to the throne of His glory in the heavens.

C. CLAYTON.

Christian Philanthropy.

Who went about doing good. Acts x. 38.

THIS epigrammatic description of our Lord's earthly life occurs, as you will remember, in S. Peter's address to Cornelius and his friends at Cesarea, an address which, on account of its reference to the Resurrection, is used by the Church as the epistle for Easter Monday. When we first hear it, such an account of our Lord's life on earth, if taken by itself and without the striking context, may appear to fall below the level of the subject, and to range Him on

the same plane of excellence as has been attained in successive centuries by many of His disciples. We must many of us have known, probably many of us do know, men and women of whom S. Peter's words would be a just and unexaggerated description—men and women who, nearly or altogether, throughout life have gone about, still do go about, doing good to their fellow-creatures; and as we think of them we are perhaps at first inclined to wonder that the Apostle should have so expressed himself, expressed himself in such very measured terms when speaking of his and our Lord and Master.

'He went about doing good.' The highest and the greatest good which He did was done for the souls of men. To have done everything for man's bodily frame, and leave his spiritual being untouched, would have been a poor and worthless kind of doing good in the estimation of Jesus Christ. It would have been such a good as man would have needed, and would have been satisfied with, had he been only an animal with no assured destiny beyond the tomb, with no conscience within him, with no judgment awaiting him. The lessons by which our Lord brought men to know and to love the Father and Himself, the pardon which He won for them on the Cross, the grace which He promised them after His Ascension, were His chiefest benefactions. But besides this He did abundant good in the physical, material, social sense. He relieved the pain of hunger, He enabled the poor and the suffering to fight the battle of life, as they could not have fought it without Him. It has been said that Christ our Lord was the first social reformer. If by social reform be meant the doing away with all inequalities between classes, or even the removal from human life of the permanent cause of a great deal of physical suffering, it cannot be said that this description of Him is accurate. He showed no wish whatever in any sort of way to interfere with the existing structure of society. He insisted on Cæsar's claims to tribute, He prescribed obedience to Scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses's seat. He found a great deal of distress in the world, and He left a great deal of distress; He found a great deal of poverty, and He left a great deal of poverty. He predicted, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation.' He announced, 'The poor ye have always with you.' His real work was to point to truths and to a life which made the endurance of poverty and distress for a short time here so easy as to be in the estimate of real disciples comparatively unimportant; but, at the same time, He relieved so much of it as would enable human beings to make a real step forward towards the true end of their existence. If our Lord was not, in the restricted modern sense, the first social reformer, He was undoubtedly, in the true and ample sense of the word, the first philanthropist. He loved man as

man, He loved not one part but the whole of man, He loved man as none had ever loved him before or since, He died for the being whom He loved so well.

II. And when our Lord had left the heart, the spirit of His work became that of the Christian Church. It too, after its measure, went about the world doing good. The New Testament guides us through the first stage of the subject. The seven deacons were ordained shortly after Pentecost in order to relieve the Apostles of the work of 'serving tables,' that is, the administration of the public alms. The wealthier churches of Greece were directed to lay by small offerings every Sunday, so that when the Apostle came by to fetch the collection the money might be ready for the poor churches in Palestine. The poorer members of the Church were regularly supplied with food at the Agape, or love feast. Widows were especially provided for. Private Christians received orphans into their houses. The duty of hospitality, that is, the entertainment of foreign Christians when travelling, is insisted on again and again in the Apostolic epistles. Gaius is said, in S. John's third Epistle, to have dealt faithfully with the members of the Church and strangers, in contrast with Diotrephes, who neglected these duties. A bishop is required in this sense 'to be given to hospitality,' and the action of Christian charity is especially observable in the case of slaves. The Apostles made no effort to emancipate them. S. Paul advises the slave, instead of asking for freedom, to make good use of his condition as a slave, but the slave knows that he is our Lord's freeman, and the freeman who is his master, if he be a Christian, knows himself to be Christ's slave. And thus Christian charity united the slave and the master, it united the Jewish and the Gentile Churches, it healed social sores, and it diffused material comfort as well as spiritual happiness.

H. P. LIDDON.

VI ILLUSTRATIONS

Our Pilgrimage. UNLIKE the founders of Egypt, of Babylon, of Nineveh, 1 S. PETER ii. 11. the patriarchs were not the builders of cities and towns, but pilgrims and sojourners, dwellers in tents (Heb. xi. 9). But they were very different from rude hordes, like the Amalekites and other 'sons of the desert,' abhorring any higher mode of life. Abraham was no stranger to the highest form of civilisation that his age afforded. He was acquainted with Ur, with Nineveh, with Damascus, with Egypt; he had left his home in one of the chief cities of Mesopotamia, not from choice, but in consequence of a direct personal call from God. Moreover, so far from regarding his present mode of life as an

ultimate end, he and Isaac and Jacob were ever looking forward to a time when it would close, when their descendants would be settled in the land of promise, and become a great nation, when the portable tent should give way to the city that had foundations.

A Stranger and a Pilgrim.
1 S. Peter ii. 11.

In great towns, a stranger, for the first day or two after his arrival, lives purely at his own expense in an inn; afterwards, in the houses of his friends, without expense: on the other hand, if you arrive at the earth, as, for instance, I have done, you are courteously maintained, precisely for the first few years, free of charges; but in the next and longer series—for you often stay sixty—you are actually obliged to pay for every drop and morsel, as if you were in the great earth inn, which indeed you are.

Strangers and Pilgrims.
1 S. Peter ii. 11.

If ye were not strangers here, the dogs of the world would not bark at you. You shall see all the windings and turnings that are in your way to heaven, out of God's Word; for He will not lead you to the kingdom at the nearest; but you must go 'through honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true, as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing' (2 Cor. vi. 8-10). The world is an overcome enemy: our Jesus has taken the armour from it: let me then speak in His words, 'Be of good courage, I have overcome the world.' You shall neither be free of the scourge of the tongue nor of disgraces, even if it were buffetings and spittings upon the face, as was our Saviour's case, if you follow Jesus Christ. . . . Happy are you, if, when the world trampleth upon you in your credit and good name, yet you are the Lord's gold, stamped with the King of Heaven's image, and sealed by His Spirit unto the day of your redemption.

Fourth Sunday after Easter

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	S. JAMES I. 17-21.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN XVI. 5-15.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	DEUT. IV. 1-23.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	DEUT. IV. 23-41 or V.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Stages of Christian Growth.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.
S. JOHN xvi. 12.

THE question is sometimes asked why three out of the five gospels for the Sundays after Easter should be taken from that discourse which our Lord pronounced just before His death. The eve of the Agony seems to belong to an atmosphere of thought very different from that of the eve of the Ascension, and it might almost seem as if the selection had been made carelessly. But in fact the two periods have this in common, that in each case the Divine Speaker is on the eve of a departure, and in His last discourse, as it is called, the elevation above all that is passing at the moment is so complete, the common passion is lost sight of, in the last survey and all-embracing purpose of the Divine Speaker, that the language of the one period is not unsuited to the other; which last discourse, in fact, reads as if it might have been uttered after the Resurrection; and to exhibit that elevation above all human circumstances which

belongs to the infinite mind tabernacling with the human form, was one part of the purpose of S. John's Gospel. In this evangelist the Crucifixion itself is regarded as a triumph, I had almost said an ascension; it is an enthronement of the Incarnate Son beneath the canopy of heaven; and the Church follows in the footsteps of S. John when she thus makes selections from his report of our Lord's words, in accordance with His distinctive principle. When our Lord tells His Apostles that He had many things to say to them that they could not bear as yet, He might well have taken them by surprise. They might have thought a discourse like that in the supper room, on the eve of what they felt to be an approaching crisis, would contain His final instructions and His final exhortations —the last consolation that they were to receive from their Master; but He warns them that there was much still to be told them in a coming time. It would be told them partly during the forty days after the Resurrection—much more, as He proceeds to explain, after the descent of the Holy Spirit. He was to guide them into all truth. What our Lord did speak to the Apostles during the forty days between His Resurrection and Ascension is told us in general terms by S. Luke at the beginning of the Acts. He was speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God—of what His kingdom or visible Church was to be; what it was not to be; what laws and rules were to govern it; how it was to be organised; how it was to be officered; what were to be the sources of its life and vigour; and, above all, how it was to assist, explain, and perfect the spiritual life of single souls that found a home within it. Such and like topics we may dare to infer were handled by our Divine Lord during those solemn days. And the result may be seen in the Apostolic epistles, especially in those of S. Paul. He would have learned what had passed, at some later time, after his conversion. When in the Epistle to the Corinthians he compared the Church of Christ to the human body, we learn that its members were to be many, but its life was to be one. When in the Epistle to the Ephesians he calls it the body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, we see it was to be no mere voluntary or human association. When he instructs Timothy and Titus how it was to be governed, how ministered to, how provided for, we learn how great a place the Church was to be in the practical life as well as in the thought of Christians. These features of the Apostolic teaching, passed on by word of mouth, from age to age, to S. Paul, may well have dated from the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension.

But it was especially after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and through Him, that our Lord was to say 'many things' to His Apostles. 'When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide

you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He shall show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore . . . He shall take of Mine, and show it unto you.' This was to be the illuminating work of God the Holy Spirit after the Day of Pentecost. He was to enable the Apostles to understand the real meaning of what they had heard from, and had observed in, their now ascended Master. 'He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive'—or take—'of Mine, and shall show it unto you.' He would make it clear to the Apostles, if it was not clear before, that Jesus Christ, the beloved Master, whom they had followed hitherto, who was now speaking to them in the supper-room, who within a few hours was to be betrayed and crucified, was not merely a righteous Man, not merely the friend of God, the promised Messiah and Deliverer of Israel, but that He was, and is the eternal Son of God, that He is 'over all, God blessed for ever,' and that when with infinite pity He condescended to become Man, and emptied Himself of His glory, and took on Him a servant's form, and became obedient even unto death, neither the weakness of His robe of flesh, nor the sufferings and the shame which He voluntarily bore, nor the ignominious death which seemed for the moment to close His career in failure and in darkness, detracted aught from the dignity of His eternal person, from the image of His Divine and unchangeable existence.

'I have many things to say unto you.' It was Jesus Himself who would speak about Himself, through the teaching of the Spirit. 'He' (the Spirit) 'shall not speak of Himself: whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak.' All that Christ had done, and suffered, and said, in the days of His flesh, would be suffused as with a light from heaven, which would bring out with startling distinctness its real meaning. The world-wide invitations to trust and hope, to love; the great sayings, but half understood when they were uttered, about His oneness with the Father; about the eternal existence when Abraham as yet was not; about His passing the knowledge of all save the Father, whom He alone also could really know; and then the claim to judge the whole human race from the throne of heaven, the absolute and unhesitating assertion of self, so unpardonable if the speaker was merely human, so inevitable if He were indeed Divine—all these would be brought to a focus by an availing, a systematising Spirit, till the great central truth of the Christian faith, the absolute deity of Jesus Christ as the everlasting Son of the Father, stood forth in all its beauty in the faith and teaching of the Apostles. And from this central truth how much else would

radiate! The infinite value of His death, incalculable by any human estimate; the virtue of His appointed means of contact with His human nature—the sacraments; the infallibility of all language that can really claim His sanction; the power to save to the uttermost all who need and who claim His help.

And here we see what is to be said and thought about a representation of Christianity which is not seldom to be met with in our day. True, genuine, original Christianity, so we are told, is only what was taught by Christ Himself. All that can be shown to be uttered by Him deserves the prestige of that great name. The very words of Christ; yes; but no words of a follower of Christ, no merely apostolic words, deserve it. And, in particular, men have gone on to show that the teaching of S. Paul is something beyond and distinct from the teaching of his Master; it may be Paulinism, and as such is in its degree interesting; but it is something distinct from its amplification, from its outgrowth, from pure and original Christianity. This is a very plausible thing. We see from the text that it proceeds on an assumption which our Lord would have repudiated and does condemn. It assumes that He meant to teach the world, as of primary and absolute authority, only such truths as should fall from His own blessed lips, whereas He says distinctly He has something else to teach it, which He would teach by His Spirit through others. He says He has many things in reserve which those who heard Him in the days of His flesh could not as yet bear to receive. He has thus made an express provision against this particular misapprehension, and we are bound to receive the teaching of His Apostles as the teaching of His Divine Spirit, who was to continue this work after He had left the earth at His Ascension, as having no less claim upon the faith and conscience of us Christians than the last discourse, or the Sermon on the Mount. And why did not our Lord teach everything Himself? Why leave things to be proclaimed in His name by those who came after Him? He gives the answer. Because the Apostles could not add to their burden of the truth in those early days.

I. The reception and the assimilation of religious truth is, from the nature of the case, a very gradual process. In the New Testament it is compared to a building. S. Paul calls it 'edification,' or house building. Of the temple of Christian truth in human souls Jesus Christ must be the foundation; 'other foundation can no man lay.' And on this is raised by the wise Master Builder, gradually and surely, wall and column, and buttress, and roof, and pinnacle, the fabric of Christian doctrine and Christian morals, till the whole edifice stands out in its complete and ordered beauty. Now, as yet, the Apostles were not sufficiently prepared for this. 'Ye cannot bear these truths

now.' They were under the strain of great excitement, bordering hard upon great distress, and that is not the frame of mind in which great and exacting truths can be easily received and have justice done to them. And besides this, they were as yet left to their own resources, and the Holy Spirit was needed by them, not merely to reveal many things to them hereafter, and to enable them each one to accept the revelation, but to distinguish the revelation from the products of mere human fancy or human speculation. If truth is to be received, it must be by a state of mind which is to a certain extent in sympathy with truth. Where this sympathy does not exist, truth itself will be rejected as foreign to the mind, as something fanciful, unintelligible, perhaps inconceivable, and the work of the Spirit, creating this internal sympathy, had not yet begun in the Apostles. And therefore our Lord had many things to say to the Apostles, but deliberately withheld them, 'Ye cannot bear them now.'

II. And His words apply, again, to the Christian Church. In these Apostles He saw its first representatives, but His eye rested on all the centuries of its coming history, on our own age no less than on those that have preceded it, and on those which are to follow us. To this Church He had many things to say which she could not bear to receive in those days of her infancy. Now, this does not mean that in all the coming centuries He would go on from time to time adding to the truths of the Christian creed by a process of continuous revelation. The faith for which Christians were to contend earnestly was, S. Jude says, once for all delivered to the saints in the age of the Apostles. Later ages might, they meant, explain what the Apostles said, they might unfold and state at length, state in explicit terms, what already lay in the Apostle's teaching. This, for instance, was what was done by the great council which authoritatively adopted the Nicene Creed in order to defend the truth of our Lord's Divinity against the Arians. But when in that creed we say that Jesus Christ our Lord is of one substance with the Father, we do not say more than S. John says in the introduction to his Gospel, 'The Word was with God, and the Word was God,' or than S. Paul says at the beginning of his Epistle to the Colossians, 'Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.' And in the same way the word 'Trinity,' expressing the threefold subsistence of the divine nature, is not itself found in Scripture, but in the baptismal formula, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' And many passages in the Apostolic writings, especially in the Epistle to the Ephesians, necessarily imply it. If these doctrines, having no ground in the teachings of the Apostles, have been added to the faith, whether in the Roman Church or elsewhere

in Christendom, they do not rest upon the same basis as restatements of what the Apostles have already stated. They are, so to speak, newly imported or foreign matters; and as such would be rejected by the early Church of Christ. We cannot, therefore, include additional doctrines proposed for the first time after the Apostolic age under the head of the 'many things' which our Lord had to say to His Church. It is not likely, to say the very least, that the holiest and wisest of the later divines should know more of His blessed will than did S. Paul or S. John. But the Church is a society, and the life of a society, like the life of a man, is a history of experiences. For in this world God is constantly saying new things to the Church with the lapse of time. This language of God is uttered in the sequence of events, which is ordered by His providence. Consider the history of our country. What different lessons has God been teaching it during these fifteen centuries! Lessons of order to the England of the Heptarchy; lessons of patience and hope to the England of the Normans; lessons to the England of the Stuarts; lessons of the need of seriousness of purpose, seriousness in convictions, to the England of the Georges; while in our own times He is showing many things, stern and tender, to those who have ears to hear, in the events amid which, day by day, we are living now. What God is teaching us to-day would have been unintelligible to our ancestors; and as we look out on the surface of our natural life, on its hopes and fears, and unsolved, and to us apparently insolvable, problems, of its incessant movement, whether of unrest or aspiration, we hear behind the clouds the announcement of a future which will be as unlike our present as is our past, 'I have many things to say to thee; but thou canst not bear them now.'

Look at the history of Israel. Israel was at once a nation and a church, and its history is described so fully in the Old Testament, for this reason, among others, that it might teach us how to look at what is commonly called profane history. Although God gave very special privileges to His Israel, He is certainly present in the history of every nation, and the main difference is that men had in some cases, and in others had not, expected to find Him. Each stage in Israel's history had its peculiar lessons. The exodus, the wilderness, the conquest of Canaan, the anarchy under the judges, the splendid monarchy of David and Solomon, the schism of the ten tribes, the decline and final fall of the royal family of David, the terrible captivity, the return, the Macedonian and other periods, the promise of the Divine Messiah. No prophet could prophesy before his day, and have been useful or even intelligible. And as each inspired writer passed away, and as each generation was gathered to its

fathers, the accents of the divine voice might have been heard still speaking for the people of the revelation, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.'

And so with the Church of Jesus Christ. In each century of its history God has spoken to it, whether to warn, or to encourage, or to stimulate, or to rebuke. Its earlier centuries would not have understood, could not have borne, what He has said to the later. The ante-Nicene Church, the Church of the great councils, the Church of the days of the barbarian conquests, the Church of the great schoolmen, the Church of the Reformation period, the Church of the revival of letters, the Church of the eighteenth and of the nineteenth centuries, each has heard—each might at least have heard—what Christ our Lord, speaking from His throne in heaven, through the pressure and urgency of events, has had to tell it. The great teachers of each later age would have been out of place in an earlier day, while they were indispensable to their own. The second century would hardly have understood S. Athanasius; the third would have been puzzled with S. Augustine; the fourth with S. Gregory. The men of the Reformation period would not have entered distinctly into the object or method of Butler, just as Butler would have found himself a stranger in the world of thought which is before us in the great teachers of our time. Will there not be others hereafter for whom we of to-day are as yet unprepared? Can we suppose that He, the eternal Word, has as yet said His last word to Christendom? Is there not much in our religious faith, in our religious practice, which prepares us to hear His announcement, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now'?

III. And, once more, our Lord's words apply to the life of individual men, and especially to each Christian. The human mind, we all know, has its distinct stages of growth. There is the stage of wonder, in which imagination is the ruling faculty, in which it runs riot, in which all that feeds it is welcome. And then comes the stage of awakening reason, in which imagination is somewhat proscribed, and everything is sacrificed, when the incredulous gaze, and young men argue in a rigid and technical way, without a ray of doubt as to the perfect trustworthiness of their method; and, if the mental growth be healthy, there comes the riper stage, when reason is at once stronger and less imperative, and when moral arguments are allowed to have their way against mere dialectics, and when the subject is looked at, as we say, all round, and not wholly or chiefly on its logical side; when, in short, the mind has acquired all that we mean by balance, whether balance of the faculties generally or balance in judgment in particular.

Now, it is plain that truths and considerations which could be

received at the last of these stages would be quite unintelligible in the first or second; and that to attempt to enforce them prematurely would lead to serious circumstances. And one reason why faith in Christianity has been forfeited by many minds in our day is that these obvious and serious considerations have been neglected, and the minds of young men or boys have been oppressed by problems which as men they would have relegated at once to their place in the world of thought, without damage to the sense of intellectual truthfulness or damage to Christian faith. And in the same way the spiritual life of the soul has its stages of experience, and truths which are welcome at a later stage are unintelligible at an earlier one. In the case of most of those who begin to look at these subjects in adult life the first stage is that of repentance for past sin. Then, if the repentance is sincere, the soul knows something of the meaning of moral evil, something of the necessary holiness of God, something of the atoning work of Jesus, God and Man, from whom the penitent claims the new robe of righteousness, and whose absolving words open a new era in his existence. And then there comes a state of spiritual illumination, when the horizons of revealed truth are gradually opened out to the delighted gaze of the soul; and first one and then another district of the Divine Mind is explored, and the soul is as glad of the Word of God as one that findeth great spoils. And then the higher stage, beyond this, is that of union with God, in and through union with our Lord Jesus Christ—a union claimed by faith, riveted by sacraments, deepened, realised, rejoiced in by what I had almost called a new sense granted to the penitent and illuminated soul, which learns to say as very few of us ever can dare to hope to say, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His.'

Now here, again, the truths which are appropriate to the higher stage would be unintelligible to the stages below. The second stage would deem the language of the highest stage strange and mystical, the first stage would count the second speculative and imaginative, while those who had as yet to enter on the first—on the stage of penitence—would probably say that they implied an altogether morbid view of life and conduct with which they could not sympathise. And yet He who made us, He who knows our needs and shortcomings before we tell Him, He surely would whisper to each one of these critics, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' And this may enable us to understand a feature of the system of the early Christian Church, which has often been commented upon unfavourably from a lack of due knowledge or due consideration. I refer to the way in which converts to Christianity were instructed, in the first centuries, in the truths of the Christian faith. Before a man was received into full discipleship,

and made the vows, and received the grace of baptism, a period of preparation was insisted on, which lasted from two to three years. And this delay was intended partly to test the sincerity of his obedience, and still more to instruct him gradually, and so thoroughly, in the truths of Christianity. During the whole of this preparatory stage a man was called a catechumen, and the teaching which he received catechetical, for he was constantly examined, in order to find out how far he was grounded in the faith of Christ, or in those lines of thought which led up to its sincere reception. The instruction generally began with those truths which we may learn from our natural reason, such as the being of God, or the law of conscience, or the immortality of the soul. And thus it went on gradually to the distinctive doctrines and mysteries of the gospel. And then at once a convert to Christianity was called a hearer; he was allowed to attend religious instruction and the reading of Holy Scripture. And then at the second stage he was permitted to remain during prayers, and was called a worshipper. And afterwards, as the time for his baptism drew near, he was taught the Lord's Prayer and the Creed—a peculiar treasure, as they were thought in those days, to the regenerate. And then he was described as elect or competent. And after baptism he was fully instructed in the various aspects of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, of the incarnation of our Lord, of the one great sacrifice made by our Lord upon the Cross, and presented to God in the Holy Sacraments. But these great and overwhelming truths were withheld until he had been grounded in the lessons which led up to them and had made their sincere and intelligent reception possible.

Now this system of graduated teaching had its root and sanction in Holy Scripture; it was begun under the eyes of the Apostles. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians S. Paul distinguishes between the natural or imperfect, and the established or perfect Christians. Christianity, he contends, contains that new and profound philosophy after which the sages of the heathen world, with their fragmentary and tentative systems, were fondly seeking; but if a man would understand these he must be instructed, and become a fool that he might become wise; must undergo a disciplinary training, if he would listen to the Apostle speaking the wisdom of God in a mystery, even that hidden wisdom which none of the princes of this world knew. And then he goes on to tell the Corinthians that he cannot speak to them as unto those fully instructed, but only as unto babes in Christ. 'I have fed you with milk'—that is, with elementary truth—'and not with meat'—that is, with a full measure of truth—'for hitherto ye were unable to bear it.' In the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the same distinction between the kind of

doctrine suitable to the weak and ignorant, and that which the trained Christian might be expected to understand. Just as the inspired writer, when about to speak of great truths of our Lord and Saviour with reference to Melchisedek, he raises himself up to the fact that some of his readers are not sufficiently advanced in Christianity to understand him. When for the time that is past ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again in the first principles of your duty to God. Ye have become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat, for every one that uses milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. The strong meat belongeth to them of full age, who by reason of use have their spiritual faculties exercised to discern between good and evil.

Here you see under the same figure of a difference of food for the body, the difference of doctrine which the soul can receive at different stages of instruction, is very vividly brought out and taught us. We see the necessity of such distinct stages of instruction as those to which I have been referring. The system is to be referred for its principle to the example of the Teacher of teachers, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. What were His parables but an appeal to the imagination? What were His explanations of His parables but a call to the first action of reason? What were His discourses but the training of the aroused reason to move reverently and seriously amongst the things of faith? The Sermon on the Mount makes the conscience sensitive of truth. The discourse at Capernaum or the parables of the Kingdom enlightened the soul with a new vision of truth; and then the discourse in the supper-room teaches, among other things, union with the Father and Son through the Spirit—that great gift of an inward presence which is the consummation of the Christian life. Our Lord, you see, did not begin with the last discourse. As St. Mark says, He taught as men were able to bear it.

And His words suggest, in conclusion, the true method of educating children in religious knowledge. A careful mother and teacher will treat the child's mind with great tenderness and reverence. She will be careful to excite interest before gratifying, or to gratify it in such a degree as its capacities may admit. She will not think of the mind of her child as of a large bag into which all the odds and ends of knowledge that are swept up from the table of common life may be thrown at random. She will think of it as of a delicate and beautiful mechanism, to be handled with tenderness and respect, and one mistake in dealing with it may well be fatal. A well-known writer has told us how she was taught by her mother the nature and attributes of God. 'I asked my mother one day who God was, and I was told to come again the next day, and at the same hour; and I came and repeated the question, "Who is

God?" and she told me to wait another day, and then I should be answered. And then, when my curiosity was raised to the highest pitch, and when my sense of the importance of the subject was immensely enhanced by the repeated postponement of the answer, I came once more, and my mother explained, in words which I shall never, never forget, how great and awful and beautiful a Being God is, and what is told us about His attributes, about His relations to the world. And all this she did in simple words and as a child's mind could bear it.' Such a lesson as that she was not likely to forget, and it was not forgotten.

Oh, how does this line of thought add to the solemn interest of life? What may not we each one of us have to learn, which we could not bear to learn now, from the great Teacher of souls before the end comes? That which invests the life of a child with so much pathos is the thought of what it may possibly have before it. Our Lord seems to a Christian to bend over each such child in His own unapproachable tenderness, and to bid it take its fill of joy while yet it may. The day will perhaps come when He will say many things to it under the discipline of disappointment, under the discipline of sorrow, which it could not bear now. There is a picture of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette on their wedding-day, which some of you may have seen, and which suggests this thought. All as yet looks as bright as a great position and the smile of friends, and human cares and prospects can make it. The young couple are scarcely more than children; it is the unclouded morning of a summer day. 'I have many things to say unto you,' might well have been the motto of those young lives. As yet the long anxiety, the indecision, the struggle, the flight, the enforced return, the trial, the imprisonment, the brutalities of the Temple, the scaffold—all these are hidden. Each stage of trial was bearable when it came; each brought with it lessons of moral and spiritual truth which else might never have been learned. It could not have been borne if prematurely disclosed. And these words suggest the words of hope and patience, in respect to that as yet veiled future, in respect to the many questions which haunt every active and faithful mind, when it looks out on the eternal world. Of that world the poet says:

'Thither we send our thoughts to dwell,
But still the wall impassable bars us round with sensual bond,
In vain we die for that beyond.
Slow traverse o'er and o'er the bound,
Walking in the unseen profound
Like flies which, on the window-pane,
Pace up and down again, again;
And they that fain would break away, into the expanse of open day,

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They know not why, are travelling still,
On the glass fence invisible:
So dwell our thoughts with the unseen,
Yet cannot pass the bourne between.'

If He were to gratify us, if He were to withdraw the veil while we still live in the life of sense, could we bear it? Is it not better as He in His great mercy wills it to be? The day will come to each one of us when He will have many things to say to us: we cannot bear them now. H. P. LIDDON.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

Doers of the Word.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any man be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. S. JAMES i. 22, 25.

NO delusion is so common, and, we may say, so absurd, as that of supposing that we are the better for hearing the word only, without attempting to practise it. Our Lord warns His disciples against this in His Sermon on the Mount. 'Every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it' (S. Matthew vii. 26).

'For if any man be a hearer,' etc.

The idea in these two verses is the carelessness of the operation, and so the inutility of it. The hearer who is not a doer is like a man who takes a careless passing glance at a polished mirrior of brass or silver which he carries about him. He is in a hurry, he takes out his mirror, looks for a moment to see if his appearance is all right, and the next moment forgets all about it. Such is the mere hearer. He looks at the word which, intelligently and devoutly used, would reveal his own self to him—looks at it only for a moment, and forgets all about himself; but if, instead of this hasty glance, he would steadily contemplate himself in the mirror of God's Word, with the view of amending whatever is amiss in the sight of his heavenly Father, then he would be blessed in his doing.

'The word of God is like a glass wherein a man may behold what

he is in the light of God; how far he has fallen from the image of Christ, how many wrong things there are in his temper and daily conduct. He is perhaps for the moment feelingly affected. But what avails all this if in his conduct the day after he is as if he had never known it? So that there must not be a passing glance, but a daily study. Not a taking up of the Bible and reading a few verses hurriedly, but a reading with attention, with reverence, with self-examination, with prayer.' M. F. SADLER.

The Giver of all Good.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. S. JAMES i. 17.

I. ALL mankind are seeking for some good; but whatever good this world can afford is but imperfectly good at best, if it were but for its very transient and perishable nature; everything beneath the sun hath its shadow accompanying it, and that shadow deeping into night, in which it soon is lost. But not so with the good and perfect gift which God bestows from above, which partakes of His own unchangeableness—a light which never wanes, has no shadow, never goes down. And therefore the Psalmist, after stating this unceasing want, saying, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good?' himself gives the answer, or rather turns the answer into a prayer, 'Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.'

And speaking of the Father of Lights, the Author of all good, the Apostle adds, 'Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.' For how did we obtain this new birth, that we should be the children of the light? Not of our own merit, or by any works of our own, but of His own free will. 'Of His own will begat He us.' And in distinction from all the vanities and shadows of this world, it was 'with the Word of truth,' the Word of God which abideth for ever. The 'firstfruits' of old were by the law hallowed to God, and offered up to Him at this season of the Passover; so are they who are thus sanctified and 'redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.'

And to this S. James, ever clothing the highest doctrine with precepts of practical duty, adds, 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear'; that is to say, since it is of the will of God that we are made His children; since it is from Him, and not

from ourselves, that every good gift cometh, the disposition suitable to us is that of listening, and waiting upon God. 'I will stand upon the watch'; 'I will watch to see what He will say unto me.' 'I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me.'

II. The Gospel for to-day is, like that of last and of next Sunday, taken from S. John's account of our Lord's last conversation with His disciples on the evening of His betrayal. Jesus said unto His disciples, 'Now I go My way to Him that sent Me, and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But, because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.' The great remedy for all sorrow is to have our treasure and our hearts in heaven. Our Lord had been speaking to His disciples of the persecution and hatred which they would meet with in the world, as He had done; of the bitter cup which He was about to drink, and of the tribulations which awaited them when He was gone. And their hearts were in consequence filled with sorrow. What greater occasion, humanly speaking, could there be for heaviness than such bereavement under such circumstances? Yet afterwards, when he was indeed parted from them, and they beheld Him ascending into heaven, no more to be with them, no more to enjoy His gracious converse, they 'returned to Jerusalem,' it is said, 'with great joy.' And here our Lord seems to imply that, notwithstanding all the trials that were drawing on, and the sad scene of suffering which they would have to undergo, yet if they would but raise their hearts to heaven, and consider Him as going to the Father, it would greatly mitigate their sorrow.

III. What is the point we are taught, the one chief lesson which the Church would inculcate on us this day? We live under the dispensation of the Spirit, and it is, I think, this, that if we would live in the Spirit, would wait and pray for and seek His guidance, it will bring us more and more to the love of Christ, as revealed to us so fully in the Gospels. There we read of Him; we hear Him, as it were, and see Him; He is manifested to us as the Son of Man, our example, our advocate, the Sacrifice for us; in His parables and precepts, in His miracles of mercy, and His daily life, we have Him, as it were, before us; it is to the love of Him, and obedience to Him, to His likeness, the Holy Spirit must conform our unruly wills and affections.

I. WILLIAMS.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Action of the Holy Spirit upon the World.

And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. S. John xvi. 8.

I. SEE here, first of all, the work of the Holy Spirit upon the Jewish world of the age of the Apostles.

It is natural to ask, to what particular sin, to what righteousness, to what judgment, was our Lord immediately referring? This question is answered by His own words immediately afterwards: 'Of sin, in that they believe not on Me; of righteousness, in that I go to the Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, in that the prince of this world is judged.'

II. But our Lord's words about sin, righteousness, and judgment have a wider scope than this. They suggest to us the three moral ingredients of healthy public opinion in a Christian country. Every society, every nation, has its public opinion, its common stock of hopes, fears, prejudices, likings, enthusiasms, repugnances, tastes, points of view—the common stock to which all contribute something, and by which in turn all are influenced. The old-world cities, each of them, had a public opinion of its own—Rome, and Athens, and Jerusalem; and now too, wherever men meet and exchange thoughts, and know themselves to be bound to each other by the ties of race, or of common interests, or of historical associations, there grows up inevitably a common fund of thoughts and phrases which may be barbarous or enlightened, as the case may be, but which is always influential. Like the smoke and vapours which hang visibly in the air over every large centre of human life, to which every hearth contributes something, and by which every window is more or less shaded, so in the world of public thought and feeling there is a like common product of all the minds which think and feel at all, which in turn influences more or less all the contributors to it. And what I am now insisting upon is, that this inevitable product and accompaniment of human society—public opinion—if it is Christian, must contain a recognition of the three solemn facts—sin, righteousness, judgment.

III. Lastly, in the words sin, righteousness, judgment, we name the three governing ideas—the three moments, so to call them—of the Christian life. The Spirit who convinces the world of sin, and

righteousness, and jugdment, carries this threefold conviction with imperious force into the heart of every true Christian.

First in order comes the conviction of sin, of a man's own sins, seen in their number and their magnitude. A Christian knows what sin is; he may fall into it, again and again, but he does not deceive himself as to its nature or its consequences. The Invisible Teacher is close at hand to insist upon the stern truth; and so the true Christian is always on the look-out for sin; he is always struggling with it; his falls do not disguise from him its radical opposition to God and goodness.

Next is the conviction of righteousness. A Christian shows what righteousness is; he has been taught its true standard by the Inward Teacher; he knows a saint when he sees one, though as yet he may be very far from being a saint himself. He knows that, in the impassioned language of Scripture, any righteousness which could be furnished out of his own resources is, regarded as moral clothing, only 'filthy rags,' and therefore he looks up to 'the Lord our Righteousness'—to that sinless Saviour whose righteousness becomes his own when it is claimed by faith, and conveyed through the chartered means of grace granted to the Christian Church.

Above all, the Christian is convinced of judgment. He knows that God is judging him day by day, and that at the last day God will judge him finally, and will award him his place in eternity. The thought of this is constantly before him; it colours and shapes his whole idea of the meaning of life and death. To be thus swayed by fear of sin, by love of righteousness, by expectation of judgment, is to be 'led by the Spirit'; it is to have passed under the influence of those great creative ideas and truths with which the Spirit was sent down from heaven, that He might purify and fertilise the lives and hearts of men. Let us pray Him to do His blessed work in us one by one; that while time lasts, and eternity is still future, 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus may make us free from the law of sin and death.'

H. P. LIDDON.

The Paraclete and the World.

It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. S. JOHN xvi. 7-12.

WE hear these words read very often; how few even try to understand them. Yet like all S. John's Gospel, the thought is intensely clear and consequent. The gospel for to-day forms a

distinct section of our Lord's last address, and falls into three well-defined divisions.

1. His departure coupled with the Advent of the Paraclete (vv. 5-7).
2. The conquest of the world through the agency of the Paraclete (8-12).
3. The personal operation of the Paraclete as the means of this conquest (13-15).

Let us confine ourselves to the second of these divisions, the office of the Paraclete toward the world.

I. The significance of the title, the Paraclete. Our rendering, the Comforter, which crept in through the Vulgate, is inaccurate, as *παράκλητος* is passive, not active, and we find the active form corresponding to it in the Septuagint, *παρακλήτωρ* (Job xvi. 2). *Παράκλητος*, which occurs in 1 S. John ii. 1, is there rendered correctly, Advocate, *i.e.* one who is called to one's aid. It is a forensic term, and generally used of the advocate for the defence; this is exactly its use here, where it is coupled with another legal term, *ἐλέγξει*, to convince (not to reprove) of wrong or error.

II. The coming and work of the Paraclete is here connected with our Lord's departure and its sad surroundings; and the conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment has primarily a reference to the world's wrong view of our Lord's death; this is clearly proved by Christ's explanation of the text, which shows that in this sense the office of the Holy Ghost is to bring home to the world the true nature of the invisible drama consummated on the Cross.

The Paraclete will convince the world:

1. 'Of sin, because they believe not on Me.' The Jewish world's idea of sin was confined to the extortions of publicans, and the infractions of the Levitical law; so they rejected and condemned our Lord because of His apparent breaking of the Sabbath, and what they termed blasphemy. The Paraclete will convince the world of a state of sin, not on these lines, but because of unbelief, that they have rejected and crucified the Messiah, and lost the very opportunity for which they professed to be waiting.

2. 'Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more': the Jewish world prided itself on its legal righteousness, and meritorious works, and condemned Jesus as a malefactor. The Paraclete will reverse this sentence, assigning perfect righteousness to the crucified Christ, as proved by the fact of His Ascension, that He goes to His Father, and will convict His judges of the greatest sin the world has seen, unbelief in its God, and crucifixion of the one sinless One.

3. 'Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.' This, our Lord shows, does not refer to any condemnation of the

Jewish world on account of this sin, for it is the office of the same Paraclete to lead some to penitence. One only, the prince of this world, Satan, is finally judged, irrevocably condemned, and deprived of much of his power; for hitherto Satan's hate had only been displayed toward the guilty; now he has assailed the life of the perfectly righteous One. As S. Ambrose says, 'The Wolf seizes the Lamb of God, and finds his jaw broken on the Rock of Ages.'

III. But the Paraclete still convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment:

1. Are we following the world in considering only certain flagrant violations of the moral code as sins, and forgetting that the greatest of all sins is unbelief, neglect of the claims of Jesus Christ?

2. Are we accepting the world's standard of righteousness, the fulfilment of our duty as citizens, and forgetting that the only possible righteousness is that incorporation into Christ, that life hid with Christ in God, by which even now we live as citizens of a better world, and have our 'conversation in heaven' (Phil. iii. 20)?

3. By neglect of the reproof of the Holy Spirit are we remaining in a state of worldliness and sin, and so involving ourselves in a participation in the judgment of the prince of this world?

The work of the Holy Ghost is to reveal the profound revolution which has been wrought by the Crucifixion in the spiritual domain. The world, righteous in its own eyes, is declared sinful, the condemned malefactor proved sinless, and the crime traced to its true author, Satan. Some such revelation will be that of the great day of judgment, when all wrongs will be righted.

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

The Gains of the Ascension.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away.
S. JOHN xvi. 7.

I. ONE reason of the expediency of the Ascension which must strike a modern believer in our Lord Jesus Christ, is that it secures to him an adequate sense of the true place and dignity of man among the creatures of God. There are several lines of thought, nay, there are some great studies, which, at least as they are sometimes handled, tend to create a degraded and false idea of man.

It is a bright starlit night, and we are walking in the country arm-in-arm with an astronomer. 'Look,' he says, 'at the North Star; the light which falls on your eye left it some thirty years or more ago just when Louis Napoleon had founded the Second

Empire by his *coup d'état*. Yet this light travels at a rate of some 222,000 miles a second, and you may thus calculate the regions of space which it must have traversed. Or look at that white band which crosses the heaven, and which our peasants call the Milky Way. That is a collection of worlds more numerous than the sand on the sea-shore, stretching away into the infinite, and separated often from each other by distances which figures cannot express. Among these are stars, so it is said on high authority, whose light must have taken even thousands of centuries in order to reach us on this earth. Or look at the Dog-star, Sirius, how he

> 'Alters hue,
> And bickers into red and emerald.'

Well, Sirius is a sun; he is about a hundred millions of millions of miles away from us. His diameter probably exceeds that of our sun ten times; and his volume, therefore, a thousand times. When it was first known that our own sun, with all his attendant planets, was moving round some other centre, just as our earth moves round him, it was a shock to thought; but this giant sun Sirius, compared with which our own is a pigmy, is, it seems, to be certainly himself in motion, probably around some central orb, the size, and place, and distance of which exhaust the capabilities of imagination. Truly we are but on the fringe of the infinities; the farther our telescopes enable us to gaze the farther are we from any prospect of reaching a limit.' And then our friend turns our thoughts, or we ourselves turn them, upon this little home of ours—the earth—a scarcely perceptible planet, a smaller satellite of a sun which itself moves round some unknown centre. 'The day was,' he says, 'when men believed this little earth to be the centre of the universe; the sun was conceived of by devout peasants as rising over the eastern hills and setting in the west by a motion of his own; the stars were but the ornaments of the heavens which canopied the home of man; and in their movements man fancied that he could read the secrets of his petty destiny. Nature did but exist, so it was thought, to form a palace in which man might dwell; and it was natural that he should think of himself, in those days of ignorance, as the first of creatures. Astronomy has told him many things, and, amongst others, his own insignificance.'

Certainly most of us do not acquiesce readily in these theories of human life. Our reason tells the astronomer that there is a moral as well as a material world, and that bulk and distances are not the only or the main tests of greatness with the Being who made them.

But a Christian falls back upon a distinct fact, which makes him

listen with interest and sympathy to all that the astronomer has to tell him, and withal to preserve a robust faith in the dignity of man. He believes in the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into heaven. Somewhere in space he knows there is at this moment, intimately and for ever associated with the glories of the Self-existent Deity of a human body and a human soul—ay, on the throne of the universe. This is what S. John saw in the clear rays of the Apocalyptic vision; 'in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain.' No other creature of God shares that incomparable dignity; the highest intelligences of heaven are bent low in adoration before the exalted Humanity of Jesus. If His Ascension had done nothing else, it would have sustained in believers, to the end of time, faith in the dignity of which human nature is capable, and which it actually enjoys.

II. But the expediency of the Ascension is further traceable in the effect which it may produce upon life and character, by making room, so to put it, for faith in Christ, and by colouring the whole character of distinctly Christian worship.

If we are to give our hearts and wills to the Author and End of our existence, if Christian worship is to be not a mere calculated compliment, but the outcome of a pure and soul-consuming passion, it is well that on the heights of heaven there should throb to all eternity a human heart to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; and that in the adoration which we pay Him we should know that we are expatiating the inmost resources of our natures at the feet of the one Being who has upon them the claim, if I may dare speak thus, of relationship as well as the claim of Deity. And thus in the worship of the Church, inspired on the one hand by an awful sense of the inaccessible majesty of God, and on the other by a trustful, tender passion which has its roots in the consciousness of a human fellowship with its awful Object, we find that which we find nowhere else on earth, and understand the words, 'It is expedient for you that I go away.'

III. A last reason for the expediency of our Lord's departure is to be found in its connection with His present and continuous work of intercession in heaven.

Now, this intercession of His is the very strength of our Christian life. We claim its power in every prayer, when we say, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord.' We associate our poor feeble prayers with His majestic pleading. We claim it in every Communion, when we present before the Father the one finished Sacrifice which is being pleaded by the Divine Victim Himself, without ceasing, in the heavens. It is the knowledge that this great work, on which Jesus Christ our Lord entered at His Ascension, proceeds uninterruptedly that makes hope and perseverance possible, when hearts are failing,

and temptation is powerful, and the sky is dark and lowering. Surely it was expedient for us that He should go away.

H. P. LIDDON.

The Work of the Holy Spirit.

When He is come He will reprove (or convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. S. JOHN xvi. 8-11.

WHEN the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost, a great number of Jews were pricked to the heart because of their acquiescence, at least, in the Crucifixion of Christ. 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified.' The death of Jesus was a national crime, a crime of the whole people, and could not have taken place if there had been anything like a belief in Him amongst the people.

The people assembled on the day of Pentecost virtually confessed this; they made no excuse. 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' —*i.e.* to avert the anger of God, because of our part in the death of Jesus.

But He also convinced the world 'of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more.'

This cannot mean that He at once convinced the whole heathen world of righteousness; but by the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus another standard of righteousness has been brought in, and what is more, men have been taught to seek for it from Jesus at the right hand of God.

There is no particular difficulty about these two clauses if we realise that the conviction was not an instantaneous, but a gradual one; and if so, a little reflection will convince us that our realisation of the righteousness of Christ depends upon His having ascended.

'Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.'

The world has learnt by the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ that the evil of the world is under the direction of a prince, even of Satan, and that by the Resurrection of Christ he has been condemned, condemned so that his slaves shall be taken from him, condemned so that his chief ally, death, is destroyed, for 'by the grave and gate of death we pass to our joyful Resurrection.'

Let us pray God very earnestly that by the action of the Holy Spirit we may one and all be convinced of sin, because of our former very ineffectual belief in the Son of God; of righteousness, that we may seek it where it is to be found, in the hands of Jesus; and

of judgment, that if we take part with evil in the least degree we ally ourselves with that which is eternally condemned.

M. F. SADLER.

The Holy Spirit and the Saviour.

He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.
S. JOHN xvi. 14.

HERE we have the great work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Saviour. He shall receive of Mine. He shall not speak of Himself, but of Mine, of what belongs to Me.

Now what are the things which especially belong to Christ, and which the Holy Spirit shows to the soul? Evidently His true and proper Sonship, that He is the only begotten Son of God.

Then His Incarnation, that whilst remaining God He should become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Then the holiness of His life, and His doing the will of His Father in every act of it. Then the spiritual meaning of His miracles, and the searching and illuminating power of His words. Then His death and its sacrificial value in cleansing our consciences; then the power of His Resurrection, in that it is the means whereby His very life is given to us. Then His Ascension to be our Mediator, and the head of His mystical body. Then His second coming, at which we all shall stand before Him to be judged.

Then the Sacraments, by one of which we are grafted into His Mystical Body, and in the other we so eat His Flesh and drink His Blood that we dwell in Him and He in us.

All these are things of Christ which we cannot possibly apprehend by our natural understanding, or by education, or by any human means. We can only apprehend them by the Spirit taking them and showing them to our souls, so that we are brought nearer to God and Christ by the sight.

If the Spirit shows us His Incarnation, then we realise that He is in very deed 'God with us.' If the Spirit shows us the holiness of His life, then we see the beauty of holiness, and begin to desire it to be in ourselves. If the Spirit shows us of the death of Christ, then we regard it as our sacrifice and propitiation, and put our trust in nothing but it, and plead nothing but it. If the Spirit shows us the Lord's Resurrection, then with the Apostle we know something of the power of His Resurrection. If the Spirit shows us the Sacraments, then we look upon them not as forms, but as means of union with Himself; and so with all the things of Christ, the Spirit shows them to us that we may be brought near to Him, and have Him dwelling in us.

M. F. SADLER.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Perfecting of the Teaching of Jesus.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you. S. John xvi. 12-15.

(1) THAT a perfecting of the doctrine of Jesus certainly takes place; and (2) in what the true perfection of this doctrine of Jesus consists, and how it takes place.

I. In our subject it is necessary, before all things, to come to a right understanding as to the real meaning of the question. The question is this, whether the teaching of Jesus is capable and in need of perfection. The question is then about the doctrine of Jesus, not the general matter, as we understand it under the name of Christian or Church doctrine, for it too easily happens that, on hearing the doctrine of Jesus, we think of the definite Church doctrine, while we silently assume that we shall find the two in perfect harmony. Christian doctrine is only a part of that which we call Christianity, in distinction from Christ Himself, and this Christianity is very much in need of improvement. Christ certainly needs no improvement; He is the same throughout all eternity. If, on the contrary, I speak of Christianity, I mean the whole condition of human life, as it exists in consequence of the work of Christ, in its outer and inner side, as it is the life of the individual and that of the whole, and that will certainly be a matter which is in need of improvement; yes, it declines from race to race, from day to day. In the Christianity of individuals the necessity is immediately apparent. Who does not know how much his religious knowledge, his Christian life, is still in need of improvement? But even if by Christianity we understand the comprehensive idea of all the thoughts and arrangements which have formed themselves in the world in consequence of the manifestation of Christ, that which we call the Christian religion, then it is not doubtful that all that is progressing, and if it is to fulfil the intention of the Lord, it must really be something quite different. The Christian doctrine is then a part of this Spirit of the Lord incorporated into the body of Christ, and the part will not be better than the whole. Do we not feel, then, that the Christian doctrine must be formed anew out of the flesh and blood of our own time? It therefore has need of perfection.

What the Lord could not do at that time, He promises for the future: 'Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth,' or rather, as it would be more exactly

translated, 'into the whole truth.' The capacity for perfection is there declared, the necessity for which He recognised in such an affecting manner: 'The Spirit of Truth will finish that which I must leave undone.' And that has proved true. A few weeks after He had spoken thus, the Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, and began from then the work of enlightenment, which still dazzles us when we gaze with our feeble eyes into the clear light of the knowledge of the Epistles of the Apostles. We should, however, certainly deceive ourselves if we wished to assume that, with the enlightenment of the Apostles of the Lord, the enlightenment which the Lord had promised was once for all completed. The enlightenment extends into all ages of the Church of Christ; it is important for all that His Spirit of Truth, which comes down from above, should lead the Church into the truth, in order to make it capable by degrees of bearing and comprehending the entire fulness of that which He has to impart. And it cannot escape us that the Spirit has not nearly accomplished this aim, that He has to labour more and more at the work of making perfect; for truly, if we examine our Christian knowledge, that cannot be perfected, otherwise it could not be so separated from our other present kinds of knowledge. It would not necessarily be different things, to acknowledge Christ and to acknowledge the world; and instead of the contradiction between them, we should be forced to perceive the harmony between them.

II. Still the chief thing for us will be, to get a right idea of the manner in which the perfecting of the doctrine of Jesus takes place. The simple consideration of the very subject tells us of what this perfecting must consist. The question is of a perfecting of the doctrine of Jesus, and this must consist, not in deviating from Jesus and surpassing Him, but in the continuation, development, and completion of that which the Lord has declared as the unalterable ground of knowledge. Making perfect does not mean removal, rejection, corruption, destruction, and dismemberment; it signifies a finishing of anything begun, by carrying on the development suitable to its nature. Where that which is exalted and mysterious in the teaching of Jesus, that which we cannot understand and grasp for the present, is put on one side, there can be no question of perfecting; this is not to be thought of where single essential parts of His teaching are thrown away. The work of perfecting can only consist in collecting all the essential parts, in the most sure and living manner, into a living and connected whole, on the one hand in itself, on the other hand with all other human knowledge. When the alleged completion would be a lowering, a weakening, of the teaching of Jesus, let us turn away. When the art consists in ascribing our own ideas to Jesus, that is not perfecting His doctrine. When we undertake to

cast aside the dependence in which we find ourselves upon Jesus, with regard to acknowledging and thinking of Him, to take our way into a more free, as it is called, which means an unrestrained, arbitrary position towards Him, there is no perfection. Where the tendency leads to robbing the whole Christian aim of life of its profound meaning, in order to make it perfectly obvious and comprehensible, there is ruin.

The Lord summarises what the Spirit will do into one sentence, 'He shall glorify Christ.' This is the true idea of perfection. He will place the image of Christ ever more gloriously, more sublimely, and attractively before our eyes, and also ever more distinctly, clearly, obviously, and evidently: the two things are connected together. It is the work of the Spirit of truth, that this Jesus Christ should be ever formed more deeply and clearly before our eyes ,so that we may yet better imitate His features. And it may be said that we wish to perfect the teaching of the Lord by making Him insignificant and enigmatical. Such an insignificant one could not have done and spoken what this great one spoke. No, this is perfecting, to bring Him into the foreground in His eternal divine clearness and glory.

R. ROTHE.

The Holy Spirit Revealing the Things of Christ.

He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you. S. JOHN xvi. 14, 15.

SO we read in the gospel for this Sunday. It is a prophecy which the Church recalls to us yearly at this time. It is a prophecy which, if in the first amazement of Good Friday, like other words of hope and strength, it was lost to sight, became, we may be sure, in that second time of waiting and suspense between the Ascension and Pentecost, a stay of the disciples' souls, a centre of infinite hope, interest, and curiosity. We can look back now over many centuries and see how it was fulfilled, how it is being fulfilled around us, and, if it happily may so be, within us.

'He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.' He, the Holy Spirit, whom Christ would send. It is a prophecy that Christ's glory, His work, His nature, His teaching, His character, should be revealed, brought home to men progressively; the Holy Spirit should make them more and more clear, should show them to the disciples, open their eyes to them, as time rolled on.

I. It was a prophecy, in the first place, of the full revelation of Christian truth. All that helps us to understand God better is a fresh revealing of Christ to us, for He is 'the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person.' All advance, there-

fore, in knowledge, every fresh prospect of the wonders of the world of nature or of the world of man, every new power of insight into the processes and purposes of Creation, their grandeur and beauty, the age-long patience of their elaboration, the infinite perfection of their detail, is a fresh light upon the mind of Him 'through whom the worlds were made.' 'All that the Father hath is Mine.' 'Without Him was nothing made that was made.' There are no exceptions. He is Lord of all, and so all things praise Him.

II. But there is yet another sense in our Lord's promise, and one perhaps that touches us yet more closely. It speaks of the gradual bringing home to men of the full force, 'the length and breadth,' 'the measure of the stature of the fulness,' of Christ's character. 'He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.'

And so the New Testament comes to an end. The first-hand pictures of the Perfect Life are drawn, both in words and in the even more faithful and life-like portraiture of altered and moulded lives; but the promised work of the Holy Spirit is not ended. None may add to the sacred record. None has added, nor taken away. Tradition, though so early busy, never put a trait to the character. Criticism has taken nothing from it. Yet how variously and gradually has that character touched and moved and quickened the Christian world, even as it touched those who first became conscious of it. Each Christian age has caught something fresh, learnt something more of it; perhaps even, alas, has forgotten again something. Some lessons have been worked slowly, but surely, into the heart of humanity—have become so much a part of the world's common heritage, that we begin to forget that though Christians did not learn them fully at once, though men have not learnt to practise them fully even now, they had their origin in Christianity—that is, in Christ.

Such are (1) the care for the sick and suffering, for human pain because it is human pain, not merely the pain of a friend; (2) the rights, the sanctity of conscience. Christian martyrs first learnt that lesson from their Master, and taught it to the world, though Christians have themselves at times forgotten it; (3) the unity, that means the brotherhood, of all mankind.

E. C. WICKHAM.

The Spirit Glorifying Christ.

He shall glorify Me; for he shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that he taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you. S. JOHN xvi. 14, 15.

WHEN at the verge of some anxious task you have taken leave of a dear friend and counsellor, and begin to treasure up his words, you find that those which were last spoken are uppermost

in your heart. They carry you through the brunt of the first onset, and cheer you in the early faintness of the blank and desolate dawn. But as the day wears on, and another and another day succeeds, you value most of all those sayings of your counsellor which sustain you in the long routine, which spring like a fountain in the soul, reviving, freshening, quickening, summoning up its latent strength for the hour when you must grapple with new emergencies.

Christ as our friend and Saviour has left us in this text perennial words. He had already fortified His timid followers against the obvious approach of persecution, whose thunders were already muttering. That fierce ordeal past, there remained behind the slow march of long hours of outward prosperity with its peculiar perils. He beheld in the future the altar of His Church set up on high; the mountain of the Lord's house established on the top of the mountains, and all nations flowing unto it; a spectacle glorious to the eye, that sees not perchance what passes in the valleys that lie between. But His ear was open to the muffled hum of voices that moaned in labour beneath the altar which they could not see, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true?' Voices which if stifled long and unanswered would burst forth and rend the heavens and the earth in their outbreak. And He thought, too, of the time far distant when those who had seen Him and those who had seen these should have been long dead, the memory of His personal look, and manner, and charm, the tone of His voice, long faded, the marvellous powers and supernatural credentials long withdrawn, and when the momentum of organised routine should be taking the place of sanguine and as yet undefeated enthusiasm.

There were then two chief dangers: first, the Church in her security would neglect some factors in the great life of the world. Secondly, the Church in her expansion would be removed away from her Head.

Against both these dangers Christ provides a safeguard in the promise that the Spirit of Truth shall take of His and declare it unto us. A dispensation flexible with the various needs of after-ages, founded and rooted in Himself.

I. The Church in her security. What deeds of wholesale crime and individual villainy are summed up in that thought! Ask those who said, knee-deep in slaughter, 'The Lord will know His own'; who followed the fourth crusade, who expelled the Moors from Spain, who conquered Peru, who maintained the Inquisition, who massacred the Huguenots, who ruled in Geneva or in Massachusetts. There is no need to dwell on a topic that darkens the page of nearly every century from the fourth to the seventeenth.

These are portions of that past with which we not only acknowledge continuity, but claim it. They cannot but make us humble now.

They must needs remind us that by suffering now and in the future we must retrieve the honour of Him in whose name they were committed. And when we feel the smart of some loss of privilege, and groan that we are docked of some monopoly, that as churchmen of this century we enjoyed, and as stewards of Christ we have honoured and done our best to satisfy, let us thank God that He tries us by the downfall rather than tempts us by the exaltation. The Spirit of Christ takes of the humility of Christ, who 'emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant,' and declares it unto us. 'If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.'

II. Then comes the other danger that besets the Church. I speak of the Church of England. She ceases to be partial. She reaches forth her arms this way and that. She forgets that there ever was such a thing as excommunication. She dissolves her alliance with a political party. She recognises that outside her borders there are many good and great men, and that her own forms, while they are the best, are not so complete as to be the only and absolute test of truth. She is not dismayed by the bugbear of liberalism, like some who have deserted her flag in the hour of need. Her preachers, careful to shut out the doctrine of a pagan hell and a Jewish gehenna, close the book of wrath and open that of mercy.

And surely, generally speaking, this change is good. Does the old title Catholic imply an actual state? Does it not rather imply a potential scope? Surely it denotes not what the Church is at any one time, past or present; how widely the body of those who own a rigid or inflexible rule extends or did extend: but rather it looks to the design of her Founder, and the future capacity of His society. It looks to the end which it must of necessity fulfil. It is a title of sympathy, of striving, of spreading.

Of course the contact of the old Church truth with other forms of truth, whatever it be called, means an age of transition, as we hear every day. But was there ever a body endowed with movement that was not in an age of transition? Was the Church of the second century, when the primitive gifts of tongues and prophecy were passing away before a more stable and permanent government, not in an age of transition? Or in the third century, when the teachers of Alexandria poured forth their volumes steeped with the doctrines of Plato, was it not in a state of transition? And surely no discoveries of science or criticism in this century can possibly quicken the transition more than those of the last four: that the world is round, that it is not the centre of the universe, that the blood circulates? Those who find science inferring that man is originally nearer akin to the brute than they once supposed him to be, forthwith on the strength of such transition lower themselves to a degree below

that of the brute—would they have done this any the less if we had been poised in a state of masterly stability? 'Let no man put an occasion to fall in his brother's way,' nor suggest doubts, nor tempt him to sin. But let it be also remembered that our Saviour recognises a law altogether as sure as any law that science has verified. 'Every plant which My Heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up' (S. Matt. xv. 13). This is indeed a terrible law in one aspect, and it holds good of every age and of every soul, whether there be transition or not. It is no part of Christ's faith to close the eyes to what science discovers, or to stand in the path of that hundred-handed 'engine at the door,' when it beats for entrance into places where the Church was once in undisturbed possession.

The springs of Christian action, nay, of all good action, are touched now and started by the Spirit of Truth, who takes of Christ's things, rather than by Christ Himself.

He takes of the Creeds. We hold fast the Nicene and Apostles Creeds; but they are not the stimulus of our work so much as the Spirit of Truth, which contemplates courageously the evidence on which they rest.

He takes of the words of Christ recorded in the Gospels: but they are not our guides apart from the light which the Spirit of Truth sheds upon them, brooding solemnly aloft.

He takes of the examples of Christian lives. For what is there to prompt us to follow them but the Spirit of Truth, that judges them fairly and interprets them nobly?

He takes of the Spirit of Christ which dwells in us, and which as it could foretell the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow, can much more represent to us those sufferings and that glory now (1 S. Peter i. 2).

Thus He is the supreme witness of Christ through the ages all along, of Christ as Son of God, as representative of God.

III. There could be no stronger experimental proof that a religion was true than this adaptability thus safeguarded. That a faith should be perfectly tenable—nay, absolutely, compellingly tenable—in the last age as much as in its first beginning, suffices to prove its truth. That it fulfils its Author's predictions in being so, though it cannot increase our assurance, throws light upon that Author's purpose. The Son of God, who redeemed man's nature, reposes confidence in man's nature when redeemed. Let us not betray that confidence.

E. C. SELWYN.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Gift of the Holy Ghost.

When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth.
S. John xvi. 13.

IT is no accidental circumstance that on the three Sundays which precede Ascension Day the gospel is taken from the same chapter in S. John's Gospel. It was in the days between the Resurrection and the Ascension that the disciples learned something of the meaning of the promise of the Paraclete, and heard the last of the Beatitudes pronounced upon them that have not seen and yet have believed.

So well had they learned the lesson that their Master taught them, that after His Ascension, after He had been parted from them, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. How changed had they become from the day, but six weeks previously, when because of His announcement that He was going from them sorrow had filled their heart!

Now they rejoiced, and their joy no man could take from them.

The secret of their joy lay not merely in the quickened faith and heightened love, but in the consciousness of the indwelling Spirit, wherewith the Saviour endowed them and all the Church as He breathed on them and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost!'

That gift was made to the whole Church—it was bestowed for all time. So great, so amazing, and yet so hidden to earthly eye, that a miraculous pledge of that Spiritual Presence was mercifully granted to convince the doubtful and to encourage the faint-hearted. The seal of its divine reality, the demonstration of its supernatural power, was the Pentecostal gift—that gift which all could recognise and bear witness to, while it symbolised the new brotherhood of mankind, and the function of the Church to proclaim to all the world the Kingdom of Christ.

I. The gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church has never been withdrawn. If we fail to recognise its true significance, we shut our eyes to the brightest privilege of our heavenly calling. We turn our backs upon that teaching of the Holy Trinity, to which the Church attained after generations of perplexing controversy; we invite despondency to overwhelm us, as we think of the future; we acquiesce in the separation by which brethren in Christ are often needlessly and never except injuriously severed from one another.

This is the teaching of the present season. And it is this thought of the Spirit of Truth, whom the Saviour Himself hath given and

who will guide us into all the truth, that I desire to call to your remembrance this afternoon.

Let us never lose hold of the thought that we live now in the dispensation of the Spirit. He belonged not only to the Apostolic Church; He did not manifest Himself only before the separation of Eastern and Western Christendom; nay, not only in the great epochs of the past, but ever, unceasingly, the Presence of the Eternal Spirit has been with the Church. For 'God hath given the Holy Ghost to them that obey Him.'

II. Many who are perplexed by the discordant voices of earthly champions of Christendom know not where to turn. They seek a refuge for their troubled souls in the quiet haven of a renounced responsibility. And yet our Saviour gave to us the promise of the Spirit that His followers might be enabled to overcome the very perils which in this age, if ever, seem to beset us.

If we once gave way to the imagination that our God is more the God of the past than of the present, we should indeed open the gate to blackest despair. That God is with us, was the hope and belief of the Hebrew Prophets. That Lord is with us, was the gospel of the Incarnation. That God is with us still, is the witness of the Spirit, the Spirit whom Christ hath sent. Through the Spirit it is that the Church is a living and growing society, and not the mechanical organisation of an expedient philanthropy. Through the Spirit it is that the Sacraments are life-giving means of grace, and not mere barren memorials. Through the Spirit it is that Holy Scripture speaks to the souls of men with the voice of God, and is to our Church the one Rule of Faith and final standard of all Christian doctrine. If we attain to this belief, happy are we if we abide in it! Thanks be to God, who is greater than our hearts! For though our faith waver, though our spiritual vision be dimmed, though, through trouble, doubt, or temptation, what we had seen we can for the time see no longer distinctly, the promise of the Lord standeth sure. Not according to our feelings is His mercy; nor are our changeful thoughts the measure of His love. The Spirit of the Lord guideth us. The progress, the movement is presupposed; and if we will have aught of the Divine guidance, He will be our guide upon the path that leadeth unto eternal truth.

The same Spirit that Christ has sent unto His Church, pervaded with His power the witness of the Old Testament. Dimly, fragmentarily, partially, but tenderly, truly, really were the outlines of the Kingdom drawn, the shadow of the sufferings of the Christ, and the rays of the glory that should follow. As He gave up His life on the Cross, the veil was rent. The barrier was broken down. In the facts of the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection,

the union of God and man was restored; and the communion of the Divine Spirit with the spirit of man was perfected, actually on the side of the divine love, potentially on the side of man by the Divine but also Human Representative of our race.

III. Now, as ever, the Spirit of Truth teaches us by the word of Scripture. Centuries have not dimmed the brightness of the lamp of truth. And the same Spirit which enriched the writers with that spiritual inspiration is present now to the students of its message. And it will guide them into all truth if they will humbly, prayerfully, honestly commit themselves to that guidance; if they are prepared, no less, to move forward upon the path along which they are summoned.

It may be the hurry of modern life, it may be the superficial character of our religious convictions, but it is only too true that on every side ignorance of Scripture is the chief cause of complaint concerning those who present themselves for ordination. Let us admit that the very excellencies of Scripture are an obstacle to their thorough study. Its teachings cannot be got by heart. It does not lend itself to rapid acquisition. Still, to no class of men should its study be more precious, more necessary, and more profitable than to those who are gathered together within a university.

The teachings of the universe, the wisdom of the ages, are here unfolded before the vision of quickened imagination and ripening wisdom. Shall not the teaching of the Spirit complete the circle of education, and fit the man for the duties of the citizenship, both of that which he has inherited, and of that into which he is called by Christ?

Not of earth alone, nor of man alone, but of God and of His love towards mankind, do we need the quickening instruction.

Nor need we doubt that the very difficulties of Biblical criticism are co-operating to enhance the value of their sacred message. More than ever we learn to trace the progress of the divine revelation, and to connect the guidance of the Spirit with the development of a nation's life and a nation's thought. 'Gods ways are not as our ways.' 'What we most dread as signs of unbelief,' said Maurice, twenty-five years ago, 'may be His method of scattering unbelief. Theologians and scientific men may both wake up with awe, and say, "He was in the place and we knew it not."' (*Life*, ii. 501.)

Physical science has taught us that man's simple preconceived ideas of the universe must give way to the recognition of the working out of age-long processes. Literary science is teaching us that in the history of our Bibles its structure is more varied, its composition more gradual than our simple preconceived ideas had deemed to be possible.

It is the Spirit of God which has given to us both the science of

the physical researcher and of the literary critic. It is the Spirit of truth which warns and teaches us to see the manifestation of God in ways more gradual, more uniform in their progress, but not a whit less loving, less wise, less all-powerful than the generations before us supposed.

Now in our knowledge of the wonders of the starry suns, now in our knowledge of some organism of infinite minuteness; now in our knowledge of the growth of the Church, now in our knowledge of the framework of the Scriptures, it is the same Spirit—the Spirit of truth—gradually guiding us into all the truth.

In each life-giving epoch, in each new advance fairly won, let us hail and reverence that Divine Presence. Humbly let us confess our proneness to error, to inconsiderate judgment. Nowhere progress without retardation; nowhere the light without the shadow; nowhere the new thought without the pride of novelty and the fall of pride; nowhere the attainment without the struggle.

Still let us move onward towards the truth, guided by the Spirit, taught by the Word, furnished thereby completely unto every good work.

So may God grant to us that when we ask ourselves of the meaning of the Scriptures to our own selves, we may be able to say that they have been unto our souls the very revelation of God and the very witness of Christ. Thus 'through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures' we shall have that hope that cannot be taken from us.

PROFESSOR RYLE.

The Law of Progress in Religion.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. S. JOHN xvi. 12-13.

I. IT is somewhat startling to observe the attitude of Jesus toward the current religion of His time. We are apt to forget that there was a Church then, and that He was a member of it. Whatever obligations in the way of belief and conduct such membership carried with it for anybody, it carried for Him. He was a member by birth and inheritance of a Church whose divine establishment and authority He never once calls in question. He permitted Himself to 'fulfil all righteousness' by complying with all its outward requirements. He was circumcised, presented in the Temple, made free of the corporation. How did He thereafter bear Himself toward the doctrine and discipline of His Church?

It seems clear that, in general, He went with it in its mode of

belief and practice. On one occasion, at least, He invoked the aid of His divine power to enable Himself and His friends to discharge their ecclesiastical obligations, when He wrought a miracle to find the wherewithal to pay the Temple tax. But while He discharged His outward debt to it, He did not hesitate to dissent openly, and as a public teacher, from many of its accepted beliefs.

There is nothing in His life like that curious carefulness of the dying Socrates to provide that the regulation cock should be offered to Æsculapius. In speaking to His disciples His phrase is, 'Moses said unto you; but I say unto you.'

But all the while He retained His membership in the Church of Moses, and recognised the law of Moses to be in general operation. In those cases where the accepted views were inadequate or faulty He set them aside, and appealed to a higher and more universal truth. This He continued to do just so fast as His disciples were able to comprehend Him. When He came to a certain point with them, He tells them that He has yet many things to say to them, but they are not yet able to receive them. He says that His people will be able to do so in the future, under the guidance of the Spirit which He introduces. It is clear that He thought of that spiritual illumination as to be slow, gradual, progressive, continuous. This promise of progress in spiritual discernment could not have been meant, in the nature of the case, to apply to the particular individuals to whom it was addressed. Some of them 'went backward, and walked no more with Him.' Some passed away while still very backward. One, at least, turned upon Him, and betrayed Him to the conventional ecclesiastical world whom He had offended. Like the other promises and commands given to His then followers, it was meant to be of continuous operation through all time, so long as His Church should endure. This is, indeed, the quality in which His Church is distinguished from that one which it superseded. That was organised around the idea of fixity, while His contained at its very centre the principles of progress.

II. Christianity, then, is meant to be progressive in every part of its structure, in doctrine, organisation, and manner of life. I do not mean only that it must always move forward in the way of gaining in bulk, in subduing to itself constantly increasing areas of the world; but that it must also undergo those inward and structural changes which are the condition and accompaniment of growth. A large portion of the Church has always been, and is, slow to believe this. It is distrustful of present inspiration. It looks to some period in the past, at which religious truth became complete, and stated finally. It does not easily associate the idea of progress with that of religion; for progress implies change,

and religion has to do with things which are abiding. It is a very common way of thinking, that the phrase, 'the Faith once delivered to the saints,' means the body of truth given by Jesus to His disciples. The fact is, as can be seen by any one who will turn to the passage, that it refers to the truth about God which had come slowly to be known through many centuries in Old Testament times. The emphasis ought to be laid, not upon 'once,' but upon 'saints.' Faith always has been, and always must be, associated with sanctity. But it cannot be the peculiar possession of any particular epoch. But it is far easier to think of religious doctrine as consisting in a set of definite propositions, strikingly displayed to a certain set of persons at a definite time, and by them passed on intact, than it is to think of it as a living body of truth which changes its form of expression from age to age, so as to adapt itself to the various generations and peoples who receive it. It is easier also to think it rounded and complete, as it is ideally, than to think of it as coming slowly and increasingly, as it does, into the apprehension of the Church.

III. That each stage of development in the kingdom should show its own peculiar form or type of life, ought to be evident for various reasons.

1. In the first place, because movement is the law of life. Only lifeless things remain unchanged. Who will say that because the Church in the nineteenth century is unlike in appearance to the Church in Asia Minor in the second century, it is any the less really or less completely the Church of God?

2. Beside this, the palpable fact is, that Christianity has been profoundly modified in passing through the centuries, without losing or even imperilling its identity. Suppose an observer able to calmly observe it in actual life at Antioch in the first century, and again at Constantinople in the fifth, again at Rome in the fifteenth, and at London or New York to-day. He could not mistake but that it was the same body, animated by the same spirit, in every stage; but the bodily features would be as diverse as are those of the diverse races among whom it has lived, or as is that of the child from the youth or the man. He would see it at one stage with but a fragment of a New Testament and only the rudiments of a creed. He would see it again with the canon of its Scriptures closed, its creeds drawn out in detail and settled by formal council; and again with an elaborate ritual and canon law added; and again, maybe, with much of these dropped away. But at what point could he say, Here it began, or here it ceased, the living body moved by the living spirit of Christ?

Religious truth neither comes, nor operates, nor abides, nor is transmitted after that simple fashion. Religion is a vital process.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Church is a living thing. As the nature of love can only be known by loving, or the quality of life by living, so the truth of God as He is made manifest in His Son Jesus Christ is only reached by His Church, or by any individual soul, as the Spirit thereof takes of it and mingles it with the currents of the soul's or the Church's life. This can only be as each life is able to bear it.

S. D. M'CONNELL.

Faith in Christ.

Of sin, because they believe not on Me. S. JOHN xvi. 9.

IT would be a very good thing if every one would settle it with himself exactly how far his belief goes: 'In what does my faith throughly assent? Is my belief positive and fixed in a God? in a revelation? in the total inspiration of the Bible? in the Personality of the work of the Holy Ghost? in my own immortality? in the eternity of rewards and punishments? in the Deity of Christ? in the vicarious character of Christ's sacrifice? in the universality of redemption? in a perfect, instant pardon to every one who believes? in my own interest in that pardon? Where do I stop? What is the limit—I do not say of a vague feeling on the subject; but what is the limit of my own distinct, full consent to those truths and doctrines? What may I fold down as certain to my own mind? And what, therefore, is my own starting-point for doubt and impiety?'

I strongly advise every one to come to a clear understanding with himself, and be able to define, 'What do I believe entirely? What do I believe shadily? What do I not believe at all?'

It would be a great help to truth, and through truth to peace, to get rid of the mistiness that lies on the confines of faith, and to be able to draw a sharp line between what you do completely, and what you do not completely accept.

And remember, faith is worth nothing except so far as it is positive. Hazy faith is no faith at all.

We have to do, this morning, only with faith in the Second Person of the Trinity.

There are three things which are the subjects of faith concerning Jesus Christ: His Person—who He was; His work—what He has done; and His claim—how far it reaches.

First, His Person. I assume that you believe in the historical facts which are recorded about Him: that He lived, and died on the Cross, and rose again, and went to heaven. And therefore that He was a Man, you cannot doubt. But how far a Man? How far did

His Deity compromise and alter His Manhood? Was He Man just as we are? Just as we are. In His Manhood He emptied Himself of the prerogatives of Deity. He was a Man. And in that parenthesis—what He was, and what He did, He was and did by the power of the Holy Ghost which was in Him without measure. And by the mission which He carried from His Father—in all He was a Man.

Of His Godhead, I will only select one proof out of many: one which seems to me to be irrefutable, and by itself sufficient. He was put to death for blasphemy; and that blasphemy was that He made Himself God. And He never retracted or qualified it. If He had been an honest man and not God, He would have said, 'You misunderstand Me.' But He did not say it. He died for calling Himself God. Either, therefore, He was a bad man, and an impostor, or He was the God, for He sealed the doctrine with His blood. And His death proves His divinity. Therefore we rest, that Christ was God and Man; His Person foreshadowed His work, for He united God and Man.

And now as respects His work. The great question is, was it vicarious? That is, did He die in our stead, to bear our punishment? For, being God, it is evident that His single death would be sufficient substitute for the death of all men, because sin, after all, is finite. But God is not finite. Therefore the death of the Son of God would outweigh, in the balance, the death of the whole world. Therefore the price would well cover the purchase.

But was it vicarious? All the sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were types of this, were vicarious. We have the express prophecy, 'God hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' And in the familiar expressions, which we all use, 'That He died for us,' as in the fifth of Romans, the word 'for' means 'instead of,' 'in behalf of,'—'He died instead of us.' And what else could that mean, 'He hath made Him to be sin for us'? Or what else would make it just in God to forgive us? for God hath said, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' God cannot break His word. Every soul sins; therefore every soul must die.

But if Christ be a substitute, then the soul does die, though it lives. It dies in its Representative. And so God keeps His word, and is just to be a justifier. 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' Therefore the work of Christ is vicarious and complete. He has paid the debt of the world.

Thus far it is plain. But if it be a fact that Christ did die for us, then it is clear from that, His claim upon us is absolute and universal. He has a right to everything we have and everything we are. For if we live by Christ, we must assuredly live for Christ.

I will not dwell longer upon these points; because it is not likely that there are any in this church who do not already subscribe to these doctrines: that Christ is God and Man; that He died in our stead, in order that 'whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life'; and that nothing we can ever give Him is enough, in token of the love and gratitude which we bear to Him for all that He hath done.

But now I reach the main point. All this is belief. It is well. But what we want, and what God requires, is faith. Faith is belief made personal. Faith is the belief of the affections. Belief says, 'Christ died for sinners'; faith feels, 'He died for me.'

Now the sin of most of us is, that belief is not yet become faith. You acknowledge the truth; but you do not appropriate it. Therefore there is no love. Therefore there is no motive-power in your belief. Your belief is really worth nothing, as to giving you peace, or to giving God glory. For understand it clearly, belief is not faith. 'The devils believe'; but they have no faith. The world is full of belief; but there is very little faith in the world. I could wish that we had never used the word belief. Trust would be the better translation, as words are now understood. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever trusts in Him'—commits Himself to Him, leans upon Him, puts his whole confidence in Him—'whosoever trusts in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.'

Here, then, we arrive at the exact sin. You believe, but you have no faith. Would not it be better to be an entire infidel than to acknowledge that Christ did really die to save you, and yet not to accept it into your heart of hearts, and let it determine your whole life and being?

If it be a fact that the Son of God has visited this world, and that He did all He did and bore all He bore to save it, then don't you think that from that moment that fact must be to the mind of God so the centre of everything, that He sees and measures everything by its bearing upon that, and every one of us is to God just according to what His dear Son is to us? I do not believe that the earth more moves round its axis, or that the heavenly bodies more revolve about the sun, than everything in God's moral system is regulated and determined by its central point, the Cross of Jesus. The question of questions is, What is Christ to you? What are you to Christ?

Now, say that the death of Christ is practically to you a cipher, a matter of history, a mere dogma, a cold abstraction, then what follows? In the first place, you could have no real peace of mind. You may have indifference, you may have apathy, you may have amusement, you may have pleasure, but you have not peace. If you

know, in your own heart, that you are a sinner, and you do not know that you are forgiven, you sit down to the banquet of life with the destroying angel in the air, and there is no blood upon the door! Therefore you have not peace, therefore you have not love, therefore the mainspring is wanting, therefore the machine won't work, therefore you cannot be religious.

Or if you say, 'I am happy,' but you do not trace it to Christ, then He is more injured and insulted, for you are happy independently of Christ; and will He not be jealous, must He not be jealous, if that happiness puts Him aside? Then, why did He come into the world, and do all He did, if you can be happy without Him? And, as far as you are concerned, then Christ has died in vain! And what must the Father feel to you, if you frustrate His Son's wonderful grace?

Say then you are not happy though Jesus died, or you are happy but not because Jesus died; then in you that great work is nullified, and think you that God does not see sin in it? or think you there could be any greater sin in the universe?

If I were to stand up before this congregation and charge you with treason against your sovereign, or with some moral sin which you are all committing, you would either repel the accusation or you would acknowledge the guilt. But now you will do neither. You will say, 'I know that my faith is not what it ought to be, I know that faith does not really actuate my life,' and yet you will say that unabashed, you will go away, and think no more about it.

But are you aware that it is not sin, commonly so called, which destroys any man? It is not for his sins that any one perishes. There is not a sin on earth which has not its representative now in heaven, because some who did that very sin are now in heaven. If you are lost, it will be because when you had done your sin you would not believe the forgiveness of it through Christ; you put away the cure, and thought nothing of the Physician. Therefore you die. That is the condemnation. It is not the bite of the viper; but that, when bitten, you would not look to the brazen serpent. And why don't you look? What evidence could God give you that He has not given you? By what voice could He call you that He has not called you? Or what love could He show you that He has not shown you? Or, does your soul not want a Saviour? Or, is that Saviour not sufficient for your soul?

Oh, how clear a thing looks to one man, and yet another, at that man's side, cannot see it. Why? It depends upon how the light falls. So it is here. You do not see—neither your sin nor your Saviour. Why? Because it wants a ray from the Holy Ghost upon your heart. But does not the Spirit shine? He is come for this

very end. He is here. That is the promise of this dispensation. It must be fulfilled. 'He shall reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on Me.'

Then why do some of us neither see sin nor believe? Because we won't. Grace does not supersede free will. You know that faith involves holiness; and you do not yet wish to be holy. You cannot give up your sins. You cannot accept the conditions. Therefore you don't believe.

They were among the last words Jesus spoke. 'Of sin, because they believe not on Me.' After all He suffered, and all He was going to suffer, He said them. I know nothing more affecting, nothing more saddening! that our dear Lord should have had to say it after all, 'They do not believe!'

And He is here now in this church, and He says it this morning. I see Him with that meek, gentle, loving, suffering face; and He is saying, 'They do not believe!'

That is a very humbling thing to preach. But why should I wonder if my preaching does not make men believe, if Jesus could not!

But they will when the Spirit comes. When the Spirit comes! Therefore again, to-day, I pray—for all preaching both to the preacher and to the hearer is nothing worth unless it winds itself up into a prayer—I pray, 'Come, O Breath! breathe upon these souls, and make them believe!' JAMES VAUGHAN.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Blessings that Attend a Religious Life.

O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! DEUTERONOMY v. 29.

THE same merciful God who said, 'I am a Father to Israel,' has given us also the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father,' and may be well supposed to address every human being on the face of the earth in the affecting language of the text, 'O that there were such an heart in thee, that thou wouldest fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with thee, and with thy children for ever!' Let us, then, attentively consider this object, humanly speaking, of God's earnest desire, and the rewards which are here said to be dispensed by Him upon all those who do

their utmost to attain to it. This view of the subject will at once present us with the whole duty of every created being, and the blessings which attend its performance.

I. The former of these is thus briefly expressed: 'To fear God, and to keep all His commandments always.' Although it is not improbable that the fear of God thus mentioned bore some reference to the awe and alarm of the Israelites at the terrors of the Lord's presence, as if it had been said, to fear God always, as they do at this moment; yet 'the fear of God' is a common Scriptural expression for the duties consequent upon a just sense of the relation in which we stand to Him as our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and future Judge. For this relation embraces two things. It regards the All-wise and All-powerful Maker of the universe as the exalted Being on whom we have to depend for every temporal and every spiritual good, and whose will it should be our greatest pleasure, as it is our surest interest and first of duties, to perform. And it next regards ourselves as the poor beings of a day, whose breath is in their nostrils, and the imagination of whose hearts is only evil continually, admitted by covenant (an act of undeserved grace and mercy) to be His children, the rescued and ransomed inheritors of a 'kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world'; if they only do their utmost to make His revealed will the great law of their lives. It is this view of the relation in which we stand to God that renders the 'fear of the Lord' equivalent in meaning to the fullest obedience to His commandments. And it is in this sense it is used by David, Job, and Solomon. But in the present instance the meaning of the phrase is placed beyond all doubt by the words which accompany it, 'that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always.' We perceive then at once that these phrases, whatever may be thought of them singly, can in conjunction mean nothing less than a strictly religious life in conformity with the known will of God declared in our Bibles. I say strictly, because it may be remarked that the words admit of no exceptions or excuses or reservations. The terms are, 'keep all My commandments always'; not, as too many flatter themselves they do, some or even many of God's precepts, but all of His commandments, and on all occasions. The favourite and besetting sin is not excepted; and no season of temptation, no cases of example or enticement, or 'following a multitude to do evil,' have the shadow of a sanction.

II. Having, then, explained the duty which a merciful God (to use the same human mode of expression) so anxiously and earnestly requires from each of us, His creatures, His servants, who 'have been bought with a price,' let us now turn our meditations upon the powerful motive proposed by the same gracious Being for our 'fear-

ing Him, and keeping all His commandments always.' This motive is expressed in the same short and summary way with the duty itself, and is this, 'that it may be well with us and with our children for ever'; which means simply that the blessing of God may be upon us and upon our children for ever.

In the Christian dispensation of acceptance and adoption by God, the believer is mercifully promised pardon for sin upon repentance and faith in the great Mediator of the covenant into which he has been admitted.

Another blessing is this, all his prayers are heard. Every petition that he makes at the throne of mercy is received and answered, either by its performance, or (if divine wisdom foresees that it may in kind or in degree prove injurious to him) by the grant of that portion of it, or of something else, which may be truly beneficial and more expedient.

But it is well with the man that fears God in another respect. He is blest with sound judgment and the best of knowledge upon the great concern of life. He is made 'wise unto salvation.' 'He that is spiritual judgeth all things.' He discerns clearly the real value of things, and can distinguish accurately between good and evil. 'The Lord layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous.'

The last blessing of the truly religious man which I shall now mention is this, that it will be 'well with him' hereafter. His present trust and confidence in God and His promises, his full and zealous obedience to all His commandments always, will be repaid at length by an eternity of bliss.

A. B. EVANS.

The Law of Righteousness.

Take heed unto yourselves lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God.
DEUTERONOMY iv. 23.

IT is impossible to exaggerate the solemn force of the Ten Commandments. They are the most ancient, the briefest, the most profound, the most comprehensive of all historic codes. They bear on their faces internal evidence of their divine origin. Above all human codes and alone of all human codes they command the heart and require an obedience even of the thought. They contain not only the fundamental laws of Judaism, but the primary basis of revelation for all mankind. Their promulgation forms a decisive epoch in human history, and the voice of the Eternal sounds from them across the centuries, saying to every soul of man, 'This is the way; walk ye in it,' when we turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You may build seven altars, and offer on every altar a bullock and a

ram, or whatever is equivalent to that in our modern days; it will avail you less than nothing unless your life be pure. 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' Over and over again in Scripture we are taught, and for the most part are taught in vain, that righteousness is the one end of life, that righteousness delivereth from death; that circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision nothing, but to keep the Commandments of God. If we would enter into life we are told as the one indispensable requisite we must keep the Commandments. Our opinions may be all wrong, our ignorance is certainly limitless; it will matter nothing if our heart be right. Unto man God saith, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.' One whole book of the Bible centres round the conclusion that this is the end of the whole matter: 'Fear God,' which is the lesson of the first table, 'and keep His Commandments,' which is the lesson of the second, 'for this is the whole duty of man.'

I. Now Moses himself, by a most profound symbol, indicated that the entire Levitic system consisted, as S. Paul dared long afterwards to say, of 'weak and beggarly elements' except so far as it served as a hedge of the moral law. The symbol was this: In the middle of the camp stood the Tabernacle, the witness, the sign of God's presence in the midst of His people. In the centre of the Tabernacle was its inmost shrine, the Holy of Holies: its one treasure was the Ark of God. The Tabernacle was splendid as those poor exiles in the wilderness could make it; it was hung with purple curtains, it was overlaid with fine gold; its courts were filled with the smoke of incense and its inner chamber with the fragrancy of the sacrifice. But to teach Israel that to secure moral faithfulness was the one object of God's revelation, the sacredness of the whole shrine was concentrated round the tables of the moral law. All ceremonial regulations were but insignificant satellites round that great Sun. This Tabernacle was the most sacred thing in the encampment; the Holiest was the most sacred part of the Tabernacle; the Ark was the most sacred object in the Holiest, and yet the Ark itself had no sanctity apart from the sacred thing which it enshrined, and those two tables of the moral law. The awful Ark of the Covenant was just nothing but the box of the law. When on the great day of atonement the High Priest entered as it were the very audience chamber of the Almighty, he stood before no sculptured image, he gazed on no visible manifestation. When, fifteen centuries later, Pompey, the Roman general, burst into the inmost shrine of the Temple after the Ark had been lost in the Captivity he saw to his

amazement nothing—an empty space. There was total silence; no silver lamp shed its radiance there; no ray of sunlight ever penetrated into the holiest place; no whisper save of the incommunicable Name ever thrilled its silence, but by the gleam of its own golden thurible and the smoke of the incense the priest saw the glimmering outline of the golden chest beneath the wings of the cherubim. Within the Ark, as its sole treasure, lay the two rough-hewn tables of venerable stone, shattered, alas, as Moses had indignantly shattered them on the mountain crag when he witnessed the idolatry of the golden calf; and thus those broken tables, that ark, that mercy-seat above on which he sprinkled the atoning blood, that awe-struck priest, those bending cherubim, were an emblem of law, of sin, of redemption, of forgiveness. They represented guilty man before the merciful God, whose law he had not kept. They proclaimed aloud: 'Thou hast given us a law which shall not be broken. Alas, we have all broken it! We perish, we all perish; but there is forgiveness with Thee, therefore shalt Thou be feared.' This, then, was to Israel a symbol that the one end of all religion is righteousness, which man forfeits, which God restores. Could there be a profounder emblem of all creation up to its most celestial hierarchies bending over the mystery of God's most holy law, contemplating as the basis of man's spiritual existence the Ten Words of God, and as the sole sources of his hope after transgression, the blood of atonement, the voice of prayer?

Here, then, was one most significant and central lesson of the Mosaic system; and, further, what profound conceptions are involved by the designation of the Ten Commandments as the Covenant of Jehovah!

First, they were a covenant. There have been but two main covenants between God and man, the Mosaic and the Christian, the Law and the Gospel. We talk habitually of the Old and New Testaments. The Hebrew word *Berith*, the Greek word διαθήκη, rendered 'testament,' did not mean a testament but a covenant, a compact or agreement. Among the Jews the use of wills or testaments was wholly unknown till they came in contact with the Romans, not long before the era of Christ. We only borrow the word 'testament' from *testamentum*, which is the Vulgate rendering, a mistaken rendering, and the Greek word διαθήκη. Neither the Law nor the Gospel can with any real meaning be called a will. The grandeur of early testaments lies in the fact that they are an agreement; they imply a conception full of blessedness, and alien to every form of false religion, the conception of reciprocity between God and man. God the Infinite, the Eternal, the Compassionate, deigns to enter into relationship with men; He delights in their services, He heals their backslidings, He seeks their love. Many codes of human

law are based on force, the law of tyranny, the law of feudalism, the rule that might is right. Others are based on avowed self-interest. The very name 'covenant' repudiates the notion of tyranny in God. If man is clay, he is not clay to be dashed about by the potter, for he is sentient clay. If a man be but as a reed by a river he may not yet, as in the poem, be slashed and hewn and trampled down anyhow by the great god Pan. As Pascal says, if he be a reed, he is a thinking reed. The more God is revealed by God Himself, the more do we see the strange condescension, infinite love, of the Covenant of Reciprocity, the Covenant of Fatherhood on the part of God, and of duty on the part of men.

II. But next, this fruitful and blessed lesson and revelation of reciprocity between God and man as set forth in the Ten Commandments is deepened by the revelation of God's new name. It is the Covenant of Jehovah. Up till the days of Moses God had been called El—the powerful; Elohe, and Elohim—He that is feared; El-Shaddai—the omnipotent; Adonai—the Lord. To Moses He revealed Himself by the new name of four letters—J. H. V. H. We do not even know, and for more than a thousand years the Jews have forgotten how it is pronounced. It was certainly not pronounced as we pronounce it—Jehovah. The Jews regarded it with such trembling superstition that they did not dare to pronounce it except with the vowels of the other name of God—Elohe. The true pronunciation was probably Jahveh. More important by far is its meaning than the mere sound of the articulated breath and air. It is almost certainly derived from the Hebrew verb *haya*; in this respect it may be compared with inspiration; *i.e.* Thou art—the truly sublime monosyllable engraved over the entrance to the temple of Apollo at Delphi. It implied the eternity and invisibility of God. The text of Malachi, 'I am Jehovah and change not,' the text of the Revelation, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which is, and which was, and which is to come,' probably express its inmost significance. The names of the gods of the heathen indicated arbitrary power and man's abject dependence; but in this covenant the Eternal revealed Himself as the God of Help and the God of Love; not as a despot over slaves, but as the Father of dear sons. The name Jehovah meant to set forth the awfulness of God as enhancing the Covenant of Reciprocity, that God had stooped to reveal His will to man, and that that will is the moral law.

III. The Ten Commandments were carved in the briefest possible form, without the appendices with which we now read them, in two *pentads* on two tables of stone. 'God spake these words and said.' What words? Very few Men multiplied indefinitely the necessaries which God had not made many. The first table said, 'Worship one

God; worship Him in spirit; reverence Him in words; reverence Him in deeds; honour your parents as the representatives of His authority.' The second table said, 'Be kind; be pure; be honest; be truthful; check evil desires.' Thus on the first table we have, 'Love God in thought, in word, in deed,' and on the second table in reverse order, 'Love your neighbour in deed, in word, in thought,' and learn from the fact that the Commandments begin and end with the prohibition of guilty thought, that God requires the service of our hearts and searcheth the very thoughts and ways. The summary of the first table is the fear of God; of the second, the love to our neighbour. On the first table stand our filial duties to our Father in heaven; on the second stand our fraternal duties to our brother on earth. The whole duty of the first table is piety; the whole duty of the second table is probity. The whole lesson of the first table is worship; the whole lesson of the second table is service. And thus, as the old Jewish writer Philo says, 'Both tables are beautiful and advantageous, opening to men level roads to secure the unswerving progress of every soul which desires that which is most excellent.' And how significant is that sentence in Deuteronomy, 'God spake these words'—and added no more. DEAN FARRAR.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Our Lord's Departure from Earth.

If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. S. JOHN xvi. 7.

I. 'THE departure of Christ from earth expedient for His Church' (S. John xvi. 7).

1. It was a part of the providential plan.

2. 'Leaving the world was no afterthought, due to disappointment and scorn. It was the purpose for which He came into it, that He might return when His mission was done.

3. He tells the disciples where He is going, for that knowledge ought to overcome the sorrow at His being gone.

4. 'He seemed to be going to death, but only as into a dark valley, thence to climb the heights beyond. He was not going to death, but rather from death. This world is under death, and He was leaving it. Life eternal is found in God.'

II. In order that the Holy Spirit might come to the Apostles and to the whole Church.

III. There was then needful for the full dispensation of the Holy Spirit to take place: first, the Cross and Passion of Christ; second, His Ascension into the Heavenly Glory.

1. 'The living, active righteousness of God could not be given save by the Holy Ghost coming forth in union with the Manhood of Christ as the Head of the living Body, the Church.

2. This gift could not be until Christ was glorified in the glory of the Father. He must go to the Father before He could send the Comforter from the Father.

3. The humanity must be lost to sight in the glory of God, else it could not transmit the divine glory. This righteousness dazzles the whole nature more than any brightness can the outward eye. When this righteousness is seen by the world, it will destroy the world.

IV. The departure of Christ from them in the Body was to add a new blessedness to faith.

Now there would be no great merit and glorious blessedness in believing if the Lord had always appeared in His risen Body to the eyes of men. The Holy Ghost then hath brought this great gift to them that should believe, that Him whom they should not see with the eyes of flesh, they might with a mind sobered from carnal desires, and inebriated with spiritual longings, sigh after.

'This blessedness hath the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, brought to us, that the form of a servant which the Lord took from the Virgin's womb, being removed from the eyes of flesh, the purified eye of the mind might be directed to this form of God, in which He continued equal with the Father, even when He vouchsafed to appear in the flesh; so as that with the same Spirit filled the Apostle might say, Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no longer. . . .

'Forasmuch then as we could in no way have had this blessedness by which we see not and yet believe, unless we received it of the Holy Ghost, it is with good reason said, "It is expedient for you that I go away."'

S. J. EALES.

Fulness of Joy

In Thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore. PSALM XVI. 12.

'FULNESS of joy!' Pleasure which fades not away, like the warmth and brightness of summer, into the chill mists of autumn, to die at last amid the cold snows of winter—but pleasure which never fades, that knows no ending!

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

I. In this world, people are frequently saddened by disappointment. Hence the words which come from a trembling, fearful heart at the sound of good tidings, 'Oh, it's too good to be true!' Then, there is about all earthly joys a sense of incompleteness, because we feel that at any moment they may, and at last they must, come to an end. Hence the expression, 'Too good to last!'

And so heathen and Christian have alike recognised the fact that a world which itself is subject to change, decay, and death cannot give 'fulness of joy.' 'Pleasure for evermore' is out of the question, because of 'the sundry and manifold changes of the world.'

And yet, when God created man He created him for perfect and eternal happiness. And man in the beginning was perfectly happy, and would have continued eternally so, had it not been for his own deliberate act.

He was perfectly happy, because he lived in the very presence of God, and in that presence is 'the fulness of joy.' But then there came that dark day when, as the consequence of his sin, he was removed from that presence, removed to the moral distance to which sin does remove a soul from God.

Then his perfect happiness was clouded over, and interrupted. Then came trouble. For the world this was 'the beginning of sorrows.'

II. We pray in this day's collect, that 'among the sundry and manifold changes of the world our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found.'

'True joys' are to be found somewhere then, though to be true they must be outside, and independent of the world, and its many changes. And if any toil-stained, care-laden soul be inclined despondingly to ask, 'Where is that there?' then let the Psalmist answer, 'In God's presence—at His right hand.'

'In God's presence.' Surely, then, true happiness ought to be the lot of every one of us—your lot and mine. For we are ever in the presence of God. If we climb up into heaven, He is there; if we go down into hell, He is there also! True—and yet the joy of that presence is not necessarily ours. You may place a light in your window to guide the belated travellers over the trackless moor, and as he draws near the very light may dazzle and cause him to stumble.

The joy the Psalmist speaks of does not end with life. It cheers the dying saint in his last moments. To the eyes that are closing on this world it shows a light more brilliant than the light of the sun; to ears grown dull to sounds which once never failed to rouse, it brings the glad echo of the angels' song. To the tired body, seized with mortal weakness, it gives renewed strength by which it

may mount up, soaring as an eagle, into that state in which the rejoicing soul shall say with new meaning and with fuller light, 'In Thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.' J. B. C. MURPHY.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS.

Reproof of the World.

S. John xvi. 8.

THE meaning is as follows:

He (the Holy Spirit) shall reprovingly convince—convict—the world in His Judgment, and, by convicting it, occasion its disintegration into the two portions of the saved and the judged, neither of which is any longer a world (ch. iii. 20; viii. 46; 1 Cor. xiv. 24).

The threefold objects of the conviction are:

Sin, which belongs to men;

Righteousness, which belongs to Christ;

Judgment, which is executed on Satan by the overthrow of his kingdom and the establishment of Christ's kingdom.

It is only the Holy Spirit who traces them to their fountain-head and culminating point:

Sin, to unbelief;

Righteousness, to Christ; and—

Judgment, to Satan.

Reproof of the World by the Holy Ghost.

S. John xvi. 8.

CHRIST gives here His Apostles and the preachers of the Gospel the highest authority upon earth, that they must rebuke the world with their preaching, and that all the world must for God's sake be subject to their preaching, and must suffer themselves to be rebuked by it, if they would receive God's grace and be saved. Verily, there is a vast grasp in a word, and the beginning of a war which was to be great and arduous, that these few mean, poor beggars, the Apostles, are to stir up the whole world, and to bring it upon their shoulders. For what is meant by the world? Not one or two of their fellows; but all emperors, kings, princes, and whatever is noble, rich, great, and learned, wise, or anything upon earth; all these are to be rebuked by their preaching, as being ignorant, unrighteous, and condemned before God, with all their wisdom, righteousness, and power, which they hitherto had had and made boast of. The world cries out furiously, when this sermon begins, that it is a mischievous, intolerable sermon, producing dissension and confusion, giving rise to disobedience, insurrection, and tumult. And we cannot wonder at these complaints; for it is a

vexatious matter that the preachers should take upon themselves to reprove all, without distinction, and should allow none to be just and good before God. Who can deem it right or reasonable that this sermon should breed such a hubbub, and bring about changes and innovations so that the whole former religion and worship, with so many beautiful ceremonies of such long standing, should be despised, and should fall? And the most vexatious thing of all is, that they who undertake the work of rebuking are not high and mighty, learned, or otherwise eminent men, but poor, mean, unknown, despised fishermen, and such folks as everybody would class with beggars and vagabonds.

Silence. S. James i. 19.

Some of the best and most beautiful works are perfected in silence. In the making of plate-glass the process of pouring the melted material is so delicate, requiring such care and steadiness, that the men, impressed with the great danger of carelessness, usually preserve perfect silence during the process.

Silence and Self-control.

Moltke, the great strategist, was a man of lowly habits and few words. He has been described as a man 'who can hold his tongue in seven languages!'

Silence. S. James i. 19.

He who would speak well must speak little.

Silence really easy.

Nature intended that it should be a very easy thing for a man to hold his tongue.

Silence with God.

With men we only have to talk, but with God we learn to be silent.

Safety of Silence.

Adam, while he spake nought, had Paradise at will.

Silent. S. James i. 19.

The frightfullest births of time are never the loud-speaking ones, for these soon die; they are the silent ones, which can live from century to century.

Fifth Sunday after Easter

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	S. JAMES I. 22-27.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN XVI. 23-33.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	DEUTERONOMY VI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	DEUTERONOMY IX. OR X.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Peace in Christ.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.
S. JOHN XVI. 33.

HERE is clearly a negative rolled up in this sentence. It is this, that there is no peace out of Christ. The order of the words gives this idea, 'That in Me ye might have peace.'

There must be negatives now. Every promise involves and pre-supposes a negative. There will be no negatives in heaven. And this is the more to be observed, because almost all that we know of heaven itself, as yet, is negative. But where there is nothing but Christ, there, there can be nothing but peace. You cannot lose the peace, because you cannot miss the Christ. But here, thousands will rise up and say, 'I do not know what peace there may be in Christ: but I have assuredly learnt that there is no peace anywhere else.'

You will remember that the words we are going to consider were the last sentence which Christ said, before His teaching turned, as by a necessary transition, into prayer. The teaching itself closed with peace. And, more than this, Jesus says that the whole of His teaching never swerved from that one end.

The duty of the fourteenth—for duty is the key-note of the four-

teenth chapter of S. John, the union of the fifteenth, the coming of the Spirit in the sixteenth—all pointed, and pointed only, to peace.

And, beyond those three peerless chapters, for we have no reason to confine the text to them, it was the property of Christ's whole doctrine upon earth. No one ever said severer things than Christ; but it was a severity only to peace. He detached, but it was that He might attach; He saddened, to gladden; He unrested, to rest the man; He stirred to tumult, and lashed the deepest waters of the soul, that He might make the greater calm; 'These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.'

What a lesson to ministers! My Master always set before me one scope of His ministry, peace. May I never lose sight of it! May every syllable I speak be always, definitely and determinately, peace! And if ever I am driven for a moment to strike another chord, may I quickly return to that, and my hand rest there, peace.

And you, see what your religion is, peace; not fear, peace; not condemnation, peace; not excitement, peace; not controversy, peace. He who has the greatest peace, so it be peace, indeed, he is nearest to the mind of Christ.

Then is it that I have not spoken right, or is it that you have not received right, if you have not this peace? Is it that Christ has not spoken by me? Or is it that you have not believed that it was Christ's voice speaking? For this at least is certain, that whoever of you has not found peace of mind, in that man the ministry has failed, and in that man Christ is not yet glorified.

Let us be careful that we understand what the peace of God is.

It is the feeling of being forgiven, a quiet conscience, a stilling sense of the love of God. That is the first thing.

Then, growing out of that, it is a certain contemplative habit of mind, that deals silently with unseen things, which lives up high enough not to be tossed and anxious much about the matters which concern this present world. For it is the repose of faith, a trust in promises, a sense of a Father's love, a Father's nearness, a Father's care, the hush of a little child leaning on the bosom.

So it becomes a placid, forgiving state of heart to all men: too lowly to be angry; too happy to be vexed. It is like a sanctuary, drawn back from noise and strife; and all is tranquil there, and all is safe, because all is at rest. That is peace.

It is of immense importance to have that peace, because, first, it is the sweetest, and the best, and the only satisfying of all possessions. It meets the deepest longings of a man's heart. Pleasure is man's delight, but peace is man's necessity. No man is complete

till he has peace. No man knows what he can be, the capabilities of his own existence, or what enjoyment is, till he is at peace.

And secondly, peace is the root of all holiness. Do not confound this in your mind. Peace comes first, holiness afterwards. Peace makes us holy. To believe that you are pardoned, to be at leisure, from the retrospect, to carry a conscience at ease, to take the unruffled reflection of Christ, even as Christ did of the Father, that is the atmosphere of a daily religious life, and that is the secret of every good thing.

For, thirdly, peace is the fulfilment of the work of Christ. Then, He 'sees of the travail of His soul' in you, 'and is satisfied.' Then, the eloquence of the Cross has not been in vain. Then, His word has accomplished its grand design, 'These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.'

Therefore, now, I ask you a question, Are you at peace? After all these years of preaching and listening, of praying and working, of seeking and waiting, and all this familiarity with holy things, have you peace? Does your soul rest upon this anchor? Do you know Christ as your own Saviour? Is He a refuge to you?

Do you say, No? Are not you yet happy? Then, has it all been in vain? Has our relationship failed of its true effect? I ask jealously, What are the causes why any one of my people is not at peace?

It is too likely, there is an awful probability, that the cause is in me, in want of faith, in want of power, in little prayer, in little love, in the Christless state of my own soul. 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.'

With that, I must deal with my own heart alone before God.

But now I ask, what is the reason on your side? It may be a want of seriousness and earnestness about your salvation. But oh, what is there in the whole world to be compared with being at peace with God? What real enjoyment can there be in anything, so long as your soul is in jeopardy? What and if death, in this world of accidents, what and if death should come up, and you are not reconciled to God?

Or, it may be that you do not see the perfect freeness of this precious gift of peace. You are trying to work up to it, when you ought to be trying to work from it; you do not place it as the very foundation-stone of the building. You think, by-and-by, to be in a better state to receive it, when you have prayed a little more, and humbled yourself a little more, and loved more, that then God will give you peace. Was that Christ's teaching? Did Christ ever say to any one, 'Go away and prepare yourself, and then come again to Me'? Never. Was not it all broad, generous, instant? 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will refresh you.'

Or, you are grieving the Holy Spirit by some continual sin. And so the tenderness of your soul is dulled, and you do not have those holy desires now, and those spiritual feelings, that you had once; or you have them, but they are very transitory, they bring no result, the Spirit does not show you Jesus—He does not bring the peace near to you, and convince you of the righteousness that is in Him.

Or, you are preoccupied, your mind is cumbered with care, and harassed, and a crowd of worldly thoughts oppress you, and so there is no room, and peace will not, cannot come to dwell with what is so turbid, or breathe so thick an air.

Depend upon it, either religion is not in its proper place in your heart, or Christ is not in His proper place in your religion.

I may, or I may not, have named the reason of your unpeacefulness. Settle it yourselves. There is a cause—what is it? Why are the consolations of God small to you? Why does not 'your peace flow like a river'? With Jesus loving as Jesus loves, with Jesus giving as Jesus gives, with Jesus speaking as Jesus speaks, with Jesus reigning as Jesus reigns, there must be something very wrong if there is not peace.

Let me lay down three rules for peace.

First, be more decided. Decision is the parent of peace. Take some steps at once heavenward, and it may be that one step will land you in peace. Many have religion enough to make them uncomfortable; they just miss the comfort, because they do not go far enough. It is likely, at this moment, that you are on the very borders of peace; one more effort, one more sacrifice, and it is yours.

Secondly, confess Christ, confess Him in the world, do not be ashamed of your better portion, begin to speak of Christ to somebody. If you honour Him, He will honour you. And peace is the seal of an honoured and an honouring Saviour.

And lastly, go up and down more in Christ, His work, His person, His beauty, His grace. See all your evidence in Him, realise your union with Him, let Him be a Presence always—listen for His 'still small voices.' He will speak, and you will hear Him, and you will feel Him, a strange and grand reality, a thing that comes, and does not go away again, like everything else, 'peace.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

COMPLETE SERMON

The Mystery of the Holy Trinity.

But the Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.
HABAKKUK ii. 20.

MYSTERY is, and ever must be, the genius of Christianity. So long as the mind is finite, it can never compass the Infinite. Therefore, be content with mystery. Love mystery. It is true that the word mystery means 'things into which some are initiated.' And you, you are the initiated.

But to the initiated and to the uninitiated alike there must be some things which are all hidden. Our religion would want one of its evidences if it were not so. How could that God be the true God who could be altogether understood of a creature? 'Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.' 'Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out.' The beatitude must always be in the future. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' They shall know God.

Meanwhile, till our capacities have that enlargement, and until all the veil shall be lifted up, and pure spirit shall dwell with spirit, you will find that all grand truths are intelligible just as, in so far, they are actually of use, and as you regard them practically. Treat them as theories, and immediately they become mysteries. Revelation is always for use and holiness. But where the duty ceases, revelation stops.

The Holy Trinity is the foundation-doctrine of our faith. All religious truth is little more than the expansion of the Trinity. The Trinity as a fact is beyond all controversy. It is shadowed out in nature, in leaves, and flowers, and many creatures. It strangely pervades Providence. It has its counterpart in the triple composition and the wonderful structure of man. It has revealed itself in sacred histories, when the Three Persons have been pleased to show themselves distinct and yet simultaneous, as in the baptism of Jesus. It is placed at the base of almost all the greatest events and truths of the Bible. It is the formula of our baptism; and it is the language of all the benedictions. It is laid out, carefully and accurately, in many places; and it is the key of more, but it is the undercurrent of all.

And yet, if you begin to reason about it, and to talk about it, the One Three, and the Three One, that instant you are lost! You

can only put your hand upon your mouth, and feel, 'He is in heaven, and we upon earth; therefore, let our words be few.'

Nevertheless, for man's comfort, for man's want, for man's necessity, the Trinity is everything. As a being, I want a great, all-loving Father. As a being fallen, I want a restorer. As a being ignorant, unclean, unhappy, I want a teacher, a sanctifier, and a comforter. And that is exactly the Trinity with which I have to do.

Or, see it thus. How can I know the Eternal Spirit of God but by some embodiment of Him; some incarnation, by which He may be pleased to make His Being accessible, comprehensible, and tangible to my senses? And how can I understand even that 'express image of His person' but by some new power in my soul, which shall both show it me, and make me able to receive and accept it?

Now, how is it? I have a book, which is the voice of the Holy Ghost. In that book, and by that Holy Ghost, I see Christ; and by that Christ, and in that Christ, I know the Father, even as He really is, and as it would be impossible for me to know Him in any other conceivable process.

Or, thus: the Father in His free and infinite grace, gives a people to His Son. That people is a sinful people, yea, aliens. The Son bears their punishment, and gives them a title and claim which He imparts to them to go back to the presence and the love and the favour of His God. But they are still quite unfit to go and dwell with Him, They would not even be happy if they were there. Therefore, the Son gives them to the Holy Ghost to change them, to remould them, to sanctify them, to purify them, and fit them, till they are willing and ready for heaven. But still, with all their sanctification, they are not perfect enough for the Father's eye. Therefore, the Holy Ghost gives them back to the Son, to add the last touches —to wash away the latest stains—to robe them for glory, that He may 'present them spotless.' And so the Son once more gives them back to the Father, who first gave them to Him for this very purpose, holier than the angels, better than the innocent, happier than in paradise. All this is grandly real and sublimely simple, to be understood by every man who will reverently receive the higher teachings.

But within all this, there are chains of thought which we cannot, must not enter, dark and awful! We can only wait outside the porch of the house, and say adoringly, 'The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.'

The expression, 'in His holy temple,' seems to describe very exactly and very beautifully how it is.

Within the three courts of the Temple at Jerusalem stood the actual temple, properly so called. It also had its three parts; and in

its innermost parts, 'the Holy of Holies,' was the Shechinah, a light always shining over the mercy-seat and the Ark. No one ever saw it, except the High Priest only once a year. Between it and the holy place was a curtain, which no one might even dare to touch. Nevertheless, though they might not look on it, every Jew knew that that mysterious light, night and day, was there, the token and pledge of God's unchanging presence; and this, knowing it was there, was his confidence and his joy. It was to him matter of faith only; but as true to him as if he saw it. And there it lay, out of sight, a hidden, sacred, mystic thing; always humbling him; always assuring him; always elevating him.

All the while, in the other part of the same structure, in the altar of burnt-offering, in the altar of incense, in the laver, in the table of shew-bread, in the candlestick, the same God was to be found, more visible, more accessible, for constant spiritual strength, for guidance and peace.

Just so it seems to be God's law that it should be with all grand truths.

There are circles within circles; shrines within shrines. Into many we may go, safely go, we are bound to go; and in those is all we really need for each day's higher life. There we know God: we meet God; we converse with God: we enjoy God.

But within it all there is a secret place where no foot may tread. Reason cannot follow there. Woe to the man who too curiously pries into its boundaries! The secret is, 'The Lord! the Lord alone!' It is the region of pure trust.

But there I know a light I cannot look on is always burning. And to be conscious that there is that hidden lustre of rays, too dazzling for human eye, is always doing good. It is always something beyond me, and above me, to lift me up. It exercises me; it humiliates me; it carries on my thoughts into the eternal. I know it is there, and I know that it is mine.

It is an advent hope; a sure anchor; because it is 'cast within the veil.' It is sacred ground; and I must 'take my shoes from off my feet,' for I hear the great 'I AM'; and I must be still. 'The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.'

Ah! there is often no service like silence; no prayer so effectual as simple adoration; no worship so acceptable to God as a speechless spirit, lying low in the dust!

Take care equally of two things, that you do not trespass on forbidden ground, and that you do go as far as you are allowed. For to do the one is presumption; and not to do the other is unbelief.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Some think that in the Athanasian Creed we do not sufficiently leave God 'in His holy temple,' and 'keep silence before Him,' in the deep recesses of His inscrutable will.

The rightness or the wrongness of the Athanasian Creed, in our public services, appears to me to rest on three grounds.

First, are the condemnatory clauses in that Creed, or are they not, actual echoes from the Word of God?

Secondly, if they are true rescripts of God's mind, is a Church justified in taking up and repeating the Lord's words?

And thirdly, is the description of the Trinity, in that Creed, a true, faithful, useful exposition of the doctrine?

By these three tests, I consider the Creed is to be tried; and everybody should abide by the verdict of his own conscience.

If the condemnation uttered in the Creed be a true reflex of the mind of God, if the Church's duty be to repeat in her creeds all God says, and if the interpretation be sound and good, then must the use of the Athanasian Creed be more than justified.

'I speak as unto wise men: judge ye.' 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.'

But remember in this, and in everything, if there be a silence which is to be commended, there is also a silence which is to be reproved. In speaking to God, we cannot be too careful; and in thinking of God, we cannot be too wary; but no less in speaking to man we cannot be too faithful, and in caring for man we cannot be too earnest.

Silence for God is not silence to God. And a hush before His majesty should often break out into an eloquence for His glory.

We have trinities on earth, which are correspondent to the Trinity in heaven.

There is the trinity of graces, 'faith, hope, charity.' And as God gathers Himself up into love, so all the graces into charity. Your faith in God, your hope in God, your love to God unite to make the unity of charity.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Needs of the Great City.

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
S. James i. 22.

I. HERE are two great classes of human lives; there are two great fundamental differences which separate them. One class is egoistic, it lives purely for self: the other is, if you will pardon me the word, altruistic, it lives mainly for the good of others. The one is Epicurean, the other is Christ-like; the one, sooner or later, goes and works in Christ's vineyard, the other does not even profess to work, or, if it does pretend that it will, it does not. The rule of the Christian is, 'Labour for God, labour for your fellow-men.' No man liveth, no man dieth to himself; even Christ pleased not Himself, and therefore the life of the true Christian is divinely beneficent and useful. The rule of the selfish man, of the egotist, of the worldling, is, 'Get, spend, eat, drink, enjoy thyself; the rest is nothing.'

We all notice the odiousness and the despicableness of the purely selfish life when we see the spectacle of it in others; but it is the essence of selfishness not to see itself in its own repulsive colours. Holding before its eyes the tiny speck of its own worthless personality, and with that nothingness shutting out the universe and the sun, it constructs for itself a chamber like that in the castle which is surrounded by mirrors, so that when a man stands in the midst of it he sees nothing but infinitely multiplied representations of himself, self-assertion, self-pleasing, self-worship, self-indulgence—they embrace every form of sin. They shift the centre of gravity from God's infinitude to a base man's utter insignificance. They make their stronghold, these passions of selfishness, in the narrow heart and corrupt desires. Sometimes this egotism takes its full force in the passions of the flesh, and then it degrades the life of the immortal being into the sensuousness of a comfort which has no sympathy because its heart is as fat as brawn; or in the sensuality of uncleanness in which men, like natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, utterly perish in their own corruption. Sometimes it

absorbs, on the other hand, the passions of the mind, and then men become worshippers of money, rank, power—heady, high-minded, railers, implacable, slanderers, arrogant, without natural affection. The former class, those swayed by the desires of the flesh, are they who indulge their own basest passions, even if thereby they utterly break up the peace of homes; they who, making their members the instruments of unrighteousness, reap in their bodies the corruption which they have sown; they who pluck the rose from the forehead of an innocent shame, and set a blister there; they who leave all over the world the deplorable traces of their uncontrolled desires. To the latter class, those absorbed by the passions of the mind, belong the ruinous conquerors whose path over the earth has been a path of sword and flame, and who have made her furrows red with the blood of men. 'The course you propose,' said Prince Metternich to Napoleon, 'would cost the lives of a hundred thousand men.' 'A hundred thousand men,' answered Napoleon, 'what are a hundred thousand men to me?' Prince Metternich walked to the window and flung it wide open. 'Sire,' he said, 'let all Europe know that you express that atrocious sentiment.' Here you have this egotism on a colossal scale, yet a man need not be a Napoleon to sacrifice the good of thousands, to slay the very future of his country, to the ambitions or the interests of himself, his party, his clique.

God, speaking in the face of outward circumstance, God, whose light shines patiently on, and shows all things in the slow history of their ripening, how does He brand such lives with the seal of His utter reprobation! Oh, how terrible and certain a retribution does this life of selfishness draw down upon it! Apart from all question of other punishment, how does it draw down upon a man a Nemesis of untamable desires, insatiable passions, inevitable fears! Even when no open shame, no headlong outward ruin comes of it, how terrible is the despair of satiety of an egotist when self demands more, and wildly craves for more than life can give, or the exhausted powers can resupply, when the heart has become dry as dust, when the gross honey has turned into gall and wormwood, when the soul, once capable of better things, is chained to the decaying corpse of the body which is full of the sins of its youth, when the miserable idol holds out in vain a palsied hand to the miserable worshipper, when the fish that has run so greedily to the gilded bait is flung down sore athirst to gasp for life among the shallows, when the very root of life is as rottenness and its blossom has gone up as dust!

II. How different from all this, and how delightful, is the altruistic life, the unselfish life, the life which is given to God, which lives for the express object of trying to benefit its fellow-men, the life, not like those others, 'earthly, sensual, devilish,' but tender, peaceful,

gentle, full of mercy and good works, without partiality and without hypocrisy. That is the life of heaven, that is the life of the saints of God. The world has ever recognised theoretically the lustre and loveliness of this life, though in envy and hatred it has not unfrequently slain or slandered those who have lived it. Rise before us as ye were, ye saints of God, in the beauty of your holiness, show us the lives, roses without, lilies within, souls that, when they look without, wear the glow of sympathy, and, when they look within, the bloom of modesty,—lives, white as the lilies in their transparent guilelessness, red as the rose in their holy enthusiasm.

That man is truly noble, that man shows how gracious a thing a human being may become, in whom the love of God, expanded to infinitude, has obliterated the love of the lower self. Can such a life be described in one word? Yes. It supplies the centre of all that is best in all the religions of the world, as, when Confucius was asked by a disciple to express all virtue in one word, his answer was: 'Is not "reciprocity" such a word?' And by 'reciprocity' he meant doing to others as we would that they should do unto us. When Auguste Comte tried to formulate the new religion of Positivism his motto was, *Vive pour les autres*; but it is Christianity which gave us a word more divine, more all-comprehensive, more steeped in emotion, more radiant with the light of heaven than is expressed by altruism —it is the word Love. Let men prate as much as they will about opinions and ceremonies, and this and that, the Word of God standeth sure that we 'owe no man anything, but to love,' that love which is the bond of perfectness, and that love which is the fulfilling of the law.

III. If ever there was an awful need to regard life as a mission of duty, it is here in London, and now, towards the close of the nineteenth century. If it was true when Wordsworth wrote, it is even more true now, that

> 'The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.'

The Cross must mean effort, it must mean reality, self-denial; it must not be unspeakably degraded into elegant ornament or party phrase. The very first Commandment is, 'Thou shalt have none other gods but Me,' and there is even idolatry at our very doors such that, as one has said, it is more gross and crude within a mile around this place than anywhere perhaps on the earth's surface.

I have no time to touch on the many ways in which the great work of helping to get rid of the evil of this vast city, of putting down this multiform and menacing idolatry can be done, but I will say that one way in which it is being constantly attempted is in the

work of our parishes. The work done by every good parish is a blessing. The poor in them are treated as dear men, women, and children, and as those for whom, however grievous their faults, Christ died. Every effort is made in parishes which poor human limitations can make to win the vicious from self-destruction and the tempted from ruin, to take care of the young, to befriend and teach the little children, to help all who are seeking our help and will second our efforts by helping themselves. I believe, but for their daily unceasing work of good and counteraction of evil, within ten years, were that work to cease, the whole country would be shaken with revolution or plunged into irretrievable despair.

DEAN FARRAR.

Hearing and Doing.

For if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. S. JAMES i. 23, 24.

WHEREIN shall we find the difference between the looking of the natural and of the spiritual race? The difference will be found in such things as these.

I. There is a difference in the act or manner of looking. The natural man looks into the matter superficially, the spiritual man more deeply. Some think that this difference is indicated in the passage in the use of the two words *beholdeth* and *looketh.* The first word, 'beholdeth,' being only like glancing at the object, or gazing in a listless unconcerned manner. The latter word, 'looketh,' meaning a much deeper and more intense gazing. In favour of this interpretation, it is certainly true that this latter word is the same as is used when it is said that the angels 'desire to look,' or 'bend eagerly forward to inquire into' the things of salvation. It is perhaps impossible to say with certainty whether the Apostle designed this difference of meaning by using two terms instead of one. There can be no doubt, however, that the difference does exist in fact, whether the Apostle meant to express it in the words or not. That beholding of the Gospel which is profitless is generally very superficial. It has no intensity. There is nothing in the look which pierces into the thing; nothing which apprehends it in its real features, or in any of its chief bearings upon the beholder. The gospel is there, and he is here. He is not drawn to it. He is not absorbed by it. His soul is at liberty, and he can go on his way, taking just a surface glance now and again at this great object as it comes into view.

The spiritual and profitable way of looking at the gospel is very

different indeed from this. It is earnest, penetrative, intense. A man looking well into the perfect law of liberty is as it were drawn into it, and draws it into himself. He is clothed unconsciously with the splendours of the kingdom in which he dwells; he is dowered with the treasures which he cannot lose; he is titled with the rights and earnests of an 'inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away.'

That man will be blessed in his looking, and 'blessed in his deed.'

II. There is a difference in the time occupied in the looking, as well as in the act of looking. The profitless look is not only very superficial, but very brief: 'He goeth his way and straightway forgetteth.' In the way he has looked he has not seen much to remember.

Religion, having due time assigned to it, will come in not to enfeeble but to strengthen the toiling men, not to excite and waste, but to calm and purify, these fretful days. 'Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, this man shall be blessed in his deed.'

III. There is another difference, as clear and as important as any that has yet been named, a difference, viz., in the practical action taken as the result of the looking. The careless looker—he who looks superficially and transiently—'goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth'—takes no action at all. Even with his looking he saw that some action ought to be taken, and without delay. He looks in the glass, and sees spots on his countenance, and feels that these ought to be removed; but turning from the glass, he goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. And they are not taken away, not touched, or touched only so as to blacken them the more, touched with the hand which is as vile as the face, not washed in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. There they are, those plague-spots of sin, vilifying God's image, darkening all the lights of beauty, and drawing to themselves, by sin's terrible attraction, more and more of this world's vileness. Then he comes again and looks at the glass, and sees that they are not much worse than they were yesterday, and 'straightway goeth his way, and again forgetteth what manner of man he was.'

On the other hand, he who looketh into the law of liberty with profit, looks that he may do. And does, that he may look again with clearer eye. 'He doeth the will of God, that he may know the doctrine whether it be of God.' Suppose such a man, not yet an assured Christian, only becoming one. He looks and sees himself, covered as we all are by nature with the defilements of sin. And what does he do? Does he go away in forgetfulness, or does he lie down in despair? He does neither. He goes to the open fountain,

and washes and is clean. Like Naaman, he may fret for a moment against the necessity, or against the character of the cure, but like Naaman, in the end, he goes down to the Jordan—to the appointed place of purification—and washes seven times, and comes out with flesh 'like the flesh of a little child.' Oh, the very angels might sing over such an one! 'Thou art washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God!' And many such there be, who are constantly coming up out of the purifying waters of grace 'clean every whit,' and ready to be clothed, not again with 'the filthy garments,' which have been 'taken from them,' but with 'change of raiment,' with the new robes of grace, as they sing the new song of salvation, 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood!

A. RALEIGH.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Christ on Earth and Christ in Heaven.

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. S. JOHN xvi. 28.

THESE words express, as we all know, what in theological language has been called the union of the two natures, the divine and the human, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. But they also express, what indeed that doctrine itself expresses when turned into practical language, many other thoughts on which it is profitable to dwell; here, as in a thousand other cases, the words of Scripture awakening many thoughts and suggesting many lessons, besides or instead of the single truth which they convey when turned into merely human language. It is the difference between the sight of the actual place, and that place known only through descriptions or pictures. The picture or the description may give an accurate representation of the form, the outline, and the colour of the place, as it appeared at the moment when it was described or delineated. But it is only the actual place itself which can catch the lights and shades of the very sky and atmosphere, and which can call up the feelings, the associations, the convictions that are naturally engendered by a recollection of the events that have passed over it. So in

the case of the verse I have just quoted; look at it in the light of the time when it was first uttered, and instead of its dimensions contracting they will grow larger and larger. What then was their original object? It was to prepare the Apostles for that greatest of all losses, the loss of the Friend, the Guide, the Comforter, who had been with them for the last three years, on the mountain and the lake, in the city and the desert, in joy and in sorrow. That presence, which had been to them the life of their life, was to be withdrawn from them. The Cross, the Sepulchre, and lastly the cloud on the hill at Bethany would receive Him out of their sight. Where should they look for the future? how should they look back on the past? To soothe, to elevate the feelings which this great change would occasion, these and many like words in the last discourse were intended.

I. First, what they had already enjoyed was theirs for ever; 'He had come into the world from the Father.' What they had seen and heard and handled with their hands of the Word of Life, no future absence could ever tear from their hearts or their memories. The world which had been so blessed to them could never again be what it had been before. It was hallowed in its every part. The light which had been shed upon it would linger yet, for days and years, after the Sun of Righteousness itself had set. They could never again be what they had been before, they could as soon lose the consciousness of their own existence as the recollection of that Divine Master who had dwelt with them so long and so familiarly.

But this was only half the truth; He had come into the world from the Father, He had lived as man with man, in the world amongst the children of the world. But He was now to leave the world and go to the Father. Intimate as had been their relations with Him on earth, yet those relations were to cease and to merge into one still higher. He was to leave the world, and be with the Father: He was to be to them what He was to all mankind, to all mankind what He was to them, the Light, the Life of all; no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit; no longer the Man of Sorrows, but the brightness of that glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

II. Such is the most general truth conveyed by these words, especially appropriate at this season when we commemorate the Resurrection and Ascension of the same Jesus Christ our Lord. But the words admit also of more special applications of divers kinds.

1. We learn what our relation to the world should be, and what it should not be. That world in which He lived and moved, and every relation of which He sanctified by His presence, is not to be despised or neglected by us:

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'Even the lifeless stone is dear
For thought of Him who once lay here:
And the base world, now Christ hath died,
Ennobled is and glorified.'

Yet our citizenship is not here. We, like Him whose name we bear, must leave the world and go to the Father; it is our duty and our privilege to live as in that thought, and they who keep that thought steadily before them will have, like the Apostles, the best support in all the trials, the changes, the excitements, of this mortal life. They who so use the world as not abusing it will have that blessing of freedom from care and anxiety, which, as has been truly said, is the portion of those only who can see time in eternity, and eternity in time; who can feel, on the one hand, that time and the things of time are not rendered worthless by the vast prospect which encompasses them, but who can feel, on the other hand, how the consciousness of that prospect alone gives them their true value.

2. Another reflection which our Lord's words suggest is with regard to that especial kind of trial which the Apostles were about to undergo, the loss of those most near and dear to us. What they were to feel in the highest possible degree, that all, sooner or later, must in some measure experience, in the separation, by death or by absence, from those to whom we most earnestly cling for support and love in this mortal life. The lesson is still in its measure the same.

3. It is well to be reminded that the Lord became Flesh, and dwelt on this earth of ours; it is still better to be reminded that He is not of this earth now, and that He dwells with us not in the flesh but in the spirit. We are Christians, not because He dwelt in Palestine, not because He died at Jerusalem, not because His Body was laid in the sepulchre, but because He ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers by the power of His spirit and of faith in His name. On this aspect of our Saviour's life beyond any other the Apostles dwelt in their writings; because this alone was common to all nations; this alone brought all nations equally into communion with Him and with the Father.

A. P. STANLEY.

Loneliness.

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.' S. JOHN xvi. 32.

I SUPPOSE we are all of us acquainted with the astronomical fact that we have never seen the other side of the moon. For it follows that as the moon revolves upon its own axis in the same

period of time that it takes to move round the earth, the same side is always turned towards this earth. We have only seen one side. Our astronomers have measured its mountains, named its craters, and mapped out its surface; but only on one side. Of the other side we know absolutely nothing, except that when this side is flooded with light the other side is dark, and that when this side is dark the other side is bright with the glory of the sun.

Now, so it is with ourselves. There is one side of our life that the world can see and criticise or admire; but there is another side of our life of which the world knows absolutely nothing, except that very often, when this side that the world can see is in the sunlight, the other side is very dark; and when this side seems to be very dark, on the other side there may be joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now, I am not speaking of hypocrites—of those who intentionally wear a mask in order to deceive. I am speaking of the universal law, the law that is recognised by the wise man in Prov. xiv. 10, 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy.'

I. Now, this is a very strange thing, this isolation of the human soul. It reminds us of that Holy of Holies in the old Jewish tabernacle, into which the High Priest alone, and that only once a year, could penetrate. There are some men who never seem to be lonely; they live merely superficial lives, and never know their inmost selves; there is no one of whom they know so little as themselves. These are superficial men. There are other men who, though they may appear indifferent to their fellows, yet do know something of this loneliness, and, knowing the bitterness of this loneliness, they crave for the sympathy of the world.

II. Loneliness is imperative. It is quite true that God has given to us certain very precious unions to minimise it; but, nevertheless, it is imperative. There is the union of family life, a blessed union. God has appointed family life, that it should be as it were a little dockyard, where the little vessel should be equipped and kept until it is launched out upon the ocean. There is the Church union, a blessed union, where God has taken out these very lonely ones in families, that they may find in the company of God's people that sympathy which is denied them in their homes. There is the union of man and wife. The spirit of union should be so close that they may be able to enter into one another's joys and sorrows. But there is an inner arcana into which none can enter. Now, why is this? We are so accustomed to find that every yearning of the human soul is so truly met by the providence of God, that it seems strange that there should be this continual drifting into loneliness, and yet

this craving for sympathy? Why is it? We can give but one answer, and that is, 'Sin.'

Now, it is quite possible for you to say, 'I will not go into that secret place. I will not face this loneliness, or bow myself to bear this consequence of human guilt.' That is why many men live worldly lives. Some men can never bear to be alone; they must be off into society. Such men will never enter themselves. And you may say, 'I won't. The veil is lifted high enough to show me that there is something beyond which I do not like to see, and so I will not go into that holy place.' And you may say so. You may say so until sickness comes upon you, until some tremendous sin comes and startles you, until you are driven into that lonely place; perhaps you may be able to say so even unto death. But you will not be able to say it for ever. And you will not cheat sin of its wages; and if you will not face the loneliness here, you will have to face it at last. One of my ideas of hell is the awful loneliness of hell. I believe there will be a grand centripetal force in heaven, the life of perfect trust. In heaven, you and I will never be ashamed to open up our hearts. In heaven, you and I will never have any secrets from one another. But if you are in hell, there will be the awful loneliness of hell. I believe in hell every lost spirit will gather any shred of covering round about itself, and will flee from its fellow-men, afraid to know them or be known by them. I can quite understand Dante's idea of a spirit hiding away from spirit. There is the awful loneliness of hell, the loneliness of fear and suspicion, the fear lest any one should know. There will be the eternal shame of hell.

E. H. STUART.

Prayer: its Helps and Hindrances.

And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. S. JOHN xvi. 23.

I. THE Helps to Prayer.

1. Faith like the Centurion's, who, when our Lord said, 'I will come and heal him,' replied, 'Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed' (S. Matt. viii. 7, 8); like the nobleman's, who, when our Lord said, 'Go thy way: thy son liveth,' believed so entirely that he did not go home till the next day (S. John iv. 50-53). A faith which shows itself in action, when we act as if we believed that our prayers were heard.

2. Fervency. 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much' (S. James v. 16). As a quaint writer has said, 'God does not care for the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are;

God does not ask about the geometry of our prayers, how long they are; nor about the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they may be; nor about the theology of our prayers, how correctly they may be expressed. He cares only for their earnestness.'

3. Resignation; 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt' (S. Matt. xxvi. 39). For all prayer must have expressed or implied, 'Thy will be done.'

4. Perseverance. 'And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint' (S. Luke xviii. 1). Two parables, indeed, for we must add 'the friend at midnight' (S. Luke xi. 5-9), both peculiar to S. Luke. And if we observed these four conditions of good prayer, how wonderful would be the result on our life!

II. The Hindrances to Prayer.

1. Want of preparation; how often distractions of thought are due to this; we have entered into the chamber of our soul, but we have not shut-to the door, and the atmosphere of the world is all around us with its plans and interests. Always pause before beginning to pray, and make an act of the realisation of God's presence.

2. Irreverence of posture; a slovenly, lazy, comfortable posture, how much it has to do with our difficulties in prayer! Prayer is a spiritual exercise, but the body has great power to retard the spirit.

3. Peevish petulance of petition; as S. James says, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss' (S. James iv. 3). How humble and gentle should be our prayers!

4. Careless, thankless forgetfulness of what we have prayed for; we should go out to watch our opportunity to co-operate with God in obtaining our petitions. Have we prayed to be delivered from some special temptation? Watch during the day against that temptation, and when it comes, remember your prayer, and use the grace which is in you.

Prayer is the atmosphere of the soul, and if our souls are to be healthy it is of as much importance that our prayers should be good as that our bodies should breathe pure air. We all know the insidious disease malaria, and what the word implies, the inhaling of a poisoned atmosphere. How many suffer from spiritual malaria, from bad prayers!

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Duty of the Church to the World.

In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. S. JOHN xvi. 33.

THOSE who first heard these words had, probably, little or no difficulty in understanding and applying them. They had no doubt as to what the world was in which they were to have tribulation, and which their Lord had overcome for them. It was for them something very definite and visible: it was that same world in and from which He had been suffering tribulation; the world of their own nation, the world of the hostile Jews, the world of synagogue and Sanhedrim and priest and Levite and Pharisee and Sadducee, the world that had been hating and reviling and was about to slay Him. Into that world they knew that they were to go forth as His witnesses, and from that world they expected tribulation, and in that world it cheered them to know they should be strengthened by Him who had overcome it. As years went on the disciples came to understand that the world had a far larger meaning, even the whole universe that He had sent them to conquer in His name. And yet for many years that world was to them still a very definite and visible thing. When the last survivor of this band of Apostles looked out in his latter days upon the world that was still unconquered for Christ, it stood out before his vision something clear and definite and distinctly separated from the Church, and he could say, 'We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' The whole world of yet unconquered and all but uninvaded heathendom, in the depths of its wickedness, under its sorrow and misery, contrasted sharply and clearly with the kingdom of God planted in the midst of it. Within the kingdom of the Church was, as yet in trust for the world, all good and godliness, and without, in comparison, all wickedness and sin and shame and misery. The line of demarcation between the gangrene world and the healthy living body of Christ's Church was still distinctly to be traced. 'We are of God. All on that side lieth in wickedness.'

But we know that as years have passed on this sharp separation between the world and the Church is no longer to be seen. Over a great part of the world the Church no longer stands in this distinct antagonism to a definite and a separate world. We have, for instance, in Europe, not the Church and the world separated into two kingdoms. We have, instead, a Christendom. We have a world Christianised: we have a Church, perhaps, somewhat secularised; but it is impossible any longer thus distinctly and sharply to separate

the two. And yet, surely, the world and the warnings concerning the world given us by our Lord exist for us still. Surely there is still for us that world to which we are not to be conformed, that world whose friendship is enmity against God, that world in which we, if we are to be His true disciples, shall have tribulation, that world which He has overcome, that we might overcome it, that world against which every one of us professes to be vowed and dedicated in our baptism.

And if this be so—and we all acknowledge that it is so—where is this world for us? Where is this world to which we are not to be conformed? Where are we to find this world that in His name we are to overcome? All Christians, as I have said, agree in saying that there is such a world. Unhappily, few Christians agree exactly in saying where and what it is. There is the strangest and the saddest confusion of thought amongst religious persons when they talk of the world, and of not being worldly. Ask them what they mean distinctly, and you will find that they almost mean something distinctly visible, something that could be as distinctly marked off for them as was Judaism from the first Christians, or as were the pagans from the later Christians, that they always mean something in the world where they are not, something that others do and they do not, amusements that they do not enjoy, practices that they do not follow, maxims that they do not yield obedience to. And strangely illogical, too, is their mode of speaking. Ask many an earnest and well-meaning Christian why he does not indulge in this or that amusement, or follow this or that practice, and he will tell you it is because it is worldly. And if you ask him why it is worldly he will answer, 'Those are the amusements of worldly men;' and if you ask him who are worldly men he will say, 'Men who indulge in worldly amusements and follow worldly practices.' And it were ludicrous, if it were not very sad, to observe the different and nice shades of distinction that men resort to to draw a line between themselves and the world. For one the theatre is a worldly amusement, and the opera is not; and for another both are equally worldly. And for one person a novel is worldly, and for another a religious work of fiction is lawful; and for one person a large entertainment in a public room is worldly, and for another, a small and private one is lawful. And so it goes on to the very colour of our dresses, and the very shape and texture of them. Men are striving to define in some strange way the world for themselves, and to show somehow or other that they do not belong to it, and that they are not worldly. Is it any wonder that men of the world, men who avow themselves men of the world, laugh at such reasoning as this, and tell us, 'It is in vain that you talk to us of not being worldly, that you stand

aloof from us and shun us, because, as you say, we are worldly; for when you come to speak one with another you each in turn are condemned and each acquitted by the other of the very worldliness for which you find fault with us. Define for us, then, what is the world before you bid us cease to be worldly. This word on your lips is far too much of a cant phrase.' It is to be feared that it *is* far too much of a cant phrase, having far too much in it of what is merely conventional, and therefore of what is seriously dangerous, because there can be nothing so dangerous to real morality or to real religion as conventional morality and conventional religion. Once begin with making trifles sin, and men end with coming to think that great sins are no worse than trifles.

There must be then, for our own sakes, and for the sakes of those whom we would win to Christ, some better and deeper knowledge of what is worldly, if we are to vindicate the word upon our lips at all.

Let us try, then, if we can find some better definition—some deeper idea—of the world and worldliness than this; and let us see whether we cannot find it just in that very aspect of the world that presented itself to the first disciples. Let us take, for instance, the view of the Apostle S. John as looked out upon the world of heathendom, and spake of the kingdom of God and of the world as in sharpest contrast.

I. What was the peculiarity of paganism? You would say it was its idolatry. And wherein lay the sin of the idolater? Not merely, not chiefly, in worshipping other deities than the one God. The sin of the idolater lay in his worshipping the whole world—the creature in the place and instead of the Creator. His sin and his misery lay in this, not that he worshipped Jupiter or Venus or Minerva or Pluto, the god of force, or the goddess of pleasure, or the god of wealth, or the goddess of wisdom. It was not in this, but in that he worshipped force, wealth, wisdom, and pleasure, and worshipped them as the only powers that he acknowledged, as the only good thing that existed for him. This world was for him his all in all. The other world, if he thought of it at all, was a shadowy, unreal, dreary place, in which he had no abiding city, and for which his soul and his heart never cried out, because there was nothing there to attract him. The world was to him all that he had to hope and live and love for—all that he feared. The very existence of the man was centred in this world; and when he died he was snatched away from it repining at the cruelty of the gods that deprived him of all that was worth living for. This was the very essence of heathenism. It was a belief in the world, and the world as man's only good. And the result was that the man became the slave of a worldly worship. He did not possess the world, but the world possessed him. He did

not and he could not overcome the world; the world overcame and mastered him; and so he became forceful or cunning or lustful, just according to the bent of his nature, according as he gave himself up to be the mere slave of this or that part, this or that section, of the world for which he lived. This was the pagan idea of the world.

What is the Christian idea of the world that stands in distinct antagonism to the idea of paganism? It is this, that we worship the Creator instead of, and rather than, the creature. It is this, that, instead of the falsehood that the world is man's world, which ends in man being the slave of the world, we proclaim the truth that the world is God's world, which ends in man being made the real master of the world. The idea that the Christian Church is in trust for man is this. The world and all upon it were made and redeemed by a loving Father, and man is the son of that Father, the rightful lord of this world and the heir of better worlds. The world is not his God, but God is his God; and the world is to be enjoyed and mastered and subdued and possessed by its lord and master, man, in the name of its Maker and its Ruler, God. It is this, and this alone, that gives manhood its real dignity, and gives to each one of us a real freedom from the dominion and the tyranny of the forces of nature. It is this, that we are not theirs, but they are ours, and ours by virtue of our redemption and our sonship to the Maker of them all. See how at once this frees man from the dominion of this present world. See how it brings to bear upon this world that and that alone that can deliver man from the mastery of the needs and the affections and the hopes and the fears and the low ambitions of the world in which he must otherwise live, and live for it alone. It brings to bear upon this world the thought and the very reality of the other world. It brings into rivalry to the passions that make man give himself to this world as its slave, that one deep, absorbing, overmastering passion if we will but suffer it to overcome us, the passion of the love of God that sets man free from the love of the world.

The world, then, is nothing less than this, any one of God's works enjoyed or possessed without God, be it what it may, the world contemplated without that counterpoise in the other world that exists and was meant to exist to prevent us from being slaves of this. And without this love of God which lifts a man above this present world, he must, whether pagan or Christian, become necessarily the slave of the world, the subject of its rule, the very servant of its whims and its caprices. He becomes a very man of the world in the very lowest and poorest sense of the word, not daring to be his own master, but the very servant, not even of the world in its largest and

best sense, but of that little fragment of the world and of society to which he happens to belong. In this great world of London, for instance, how many are the little worlds in which men and women live separate and apart from each other, the commercial world, the literary world, the fashionable world, the legal world, the political world. Each one of them is a little prison-house for the man who belongs to it and it alone, out of which he has not the strength, if he has the wish, to make his way. He becomes the very bondslave of his own little world, his synagogue from which exclusion were to him a very death. The sentence of exclusion for the political man from his party, for the fashionable man from his society, for the man of any one of these worlds from the world to which he belongs, is a very casting forth out of Paradise. He goes forth, ashamed and wretched, not knowing where to rest.

II. And so we live, every one of us, or we are in danger of living, in the most abject slavery to the world to which we belong. And what will set us free? The truth and the truth alone makes man free, the truth that teaches each one of us that we are redeemed and immortal spirits, telling us that we belong not to ourselves nor yet to our party, nor yet to our world, but to the God in heaven who made us and will judge us and has redeemed us. This alone gives a man the courage that comes forth from the very depths of self-sacrifice and humiliation before his Lord and Master to rise up and in His name, in the name of His law, and in the power of His might, to defy the smaller laws, to break through the stringent customs, to brave the hostile opinions of the world in which he lives. And the man who cannot do this is not yet made free with the glorious liberty of a son of God. He is overcome by the world: he has not yet learnt to overcome the world.

This, then, you see, is the spirit in which the Christian should live in the world and yet not be of it, a citizen of it in the best sense, and yet one whose citizenship and conversation are in another world.

It is not and never was the duty of the Church to conform herself to the spirit of the age. It is the duty of the Church to instruct the age, to love the age, and if need be to rebuke the age, but never yet in its whole history has it been its duty to conform to the spirit of the age. And yet, on the other hand, oh how deeply and intensely it is the duty of the Church, if not to conform to the age, to understand and sympathise with her age, to be in very deed a dweller amongst men, a friend and companion to each home and heart, if possible, even like the Son of Man who came eating and drinking and sitting at good men's feasts; to be a companion of the home, a cheerful, kindly, yet solemn, wise, tender, faithful, and loving friend. The Church is never to adapt her dogma to the philosophy of the

age, but woe be to her if she cannot clearly discern the very point at which the dogma comes into contact with the spirit of the age, and as far as possible seek to harmonise them. The Church is never to yield to the cries of the age, but woe betide her if she cannot understand and feel for them! The Church is never to give a stone to those who cry for bread, but woe be to her if she cannot distinguish clearly the very bread of heaven that she has to give them! The Church is not to stand aside in ignorant isolation and impatience at the progress of the world. She is not to cry from out of the cloister with an angry and impotent railing, as the world with its busy throng and march seems to pass by the very place where she dwells; she is to go forth into the very streets and marts where men meet, as the disciples of old went into the porch to dispute with the philosophers and into the streets to reason with the common people. She is to go forth wherever men are, and in the name of her divine Master who died to redeem humanity, whatever men are doing and thinking, she is to say with an infinitely deeper meaning than it had in the lips of him who first said it, 'We are human, and there is nothing in or of our age that we can count estranged from us.' That is the mission of the Church in our day. The mission of the Church is to be in the world and yet not of it. The Church is to be of her day and yet of all days and of all ages, having truths deeper and facts greater and laws and powers mightier, to speak of and to reveal than even the facts and the truths and the laws which science is revealing to us now. Yes, in this way only can the Church hope to overcome the world. ARCHBISHOP MAGEE.

The Habit of Prayer.

Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. S. JOHN xvi. 24.

I. THE necessity of prayer for man's spiritual life.

As our bodily life discovers itself by its activity, so is the presence of the Holy Spirit in us discovered by a spiritual activity; and this activity is the spirit of continual prayer. Prayer is to spiritual life what the beating of the pulse and the drawing of the breath are to the life of the body. It would be as absurd to suppose that life could last when the body was cold and motionless and senseless, as to call a soul alive which does not pray. The state or habit of spiritual life exerts itself, consists, in the continual activity of prayer.

II. The habit of prayer is the peculiar mark and special privilege of the regenerate.

III. Difficulties in the way of prayer are often temptations of the devil.

IV. Prayer is hindered by evil thoughts.

V. We must strive against evil thoughts in prayer, but must not suffer them to discourage us, or destroy our faith in God.

A certain old man was sorely tempted by evil thoughts for ten years so that he began to despair, saying, 'Now I have lost my soul, and because I have now perished, I will return to the world.' But as he went there came to him a voice saying, 'The ten years in which thou hast contended will be thy crowns; return therefore to thy place, and I will free thee from every evil thought.' And immediately returning, he continued in the work which he had begun. It is not therefore good that any one should despair on account of his thoughts, for these rather procure crowns for us, if we go on our way, bearing them manfully.

VI. Prayer should be frequent.

S. Augustine and S. Chrysostom teach with S. Thomas that 'frequent prayers are necessary, lest devotion once kindled should become wholly extinguished.' 'For as wood,' says S. Thomas, 'when it has been once kindled, is more easily kindled a second time; so the mind, once stimulated to devotion, is afterwards more easily recalled to its previous devotion, and this by means of frequent ejaculations.'

VII. Prayer must be offered in the name of Jesus Christ.

S. J. EALES.

The Object of Christ's Teaching.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.
S. JOHN xvi. 33.

I. 'THESE things,' our blessed Lord says to us no less than to the disciples of old, 'these things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.' It is hardly necessary for me to remind you, that both the Old and the New Testaments are full of prophecies and declarations, set before us in various forms, and reiterated by almost every inspired writer, that the mission of the Messiah, the Son of God, coming in our nature to establish His kingdom in the world and in the hearts of men, was to bring to His people the blessings of peace. The benedictions of the law witnessed to this hope. It was the ground of the Psalmist's most jubilant thanksgiving. The prophets in the darkest hour of the world's existence stayed their hearts on the thought of His mani-

festation, whose character was proclaimed in the majestic and expressive title of Prince of Peace. The angels' song declared it at His birth. The two-fold purpose of His Incarnation was to give glory to God, which man had failed to do, and to restore to the dwellers in a redeemed earth that peace which man had also failed to cultivate and maintain. And so in this discourse with His disciples, of which my text forms almost the concluding words, Jesus seals and conveys to them His peace. In after-times they would look back and remember it to have been His dying bequest: 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.' And when all had been accomplished, and after the Resurrection He came to them again in the upper chamber where they were gathered together for fear of the Jews, He greeted them with the same sweet words, 'Peace be unto you.'

II. Let us then, remembering our blessed Lord's words, which declare the purport of His teaching to be that in Him we may have peace, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith we may edify one another. As much as in us lies let us live peaceably with all men. And to this end let us ever bear in mind the great truth taught us in the text, and the principles involved in it. These principles are deeper and more spiritual than we are apt to think when we look upon unity as merely an ecclesiastical theory, the dream of the visionary and the unpractical. For unity among men is the belief and the confession that God is one. God is the source and the ground of it, as of everything that is good. It must rest on this one foundation, or else whatever zeal or learning may be employed in the endeavour to restore it to a distracted and divided Christendom, they cannot but signally fail of working any deliverance on the earth, or bringing men nearer to each other, and nearer to God. We must, then, set God always before us, as the one and only object of faith, the one centre of being and life, in whom, and in whose Spirit, alone, we can have fellowship and communion and peace with one another.

D. F. SANDFORD.

The Name of Jesus.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. S. John xvi. 23-24.

I. HUMAN life is the life of growth, of growing desire, a life of asking, a life of prayer. But what a strange and bewildering noise is this actual prayer of man, as it ascends from an

unregenerated world into the ears of the great God! What a hubbub of requests! What a jumble of contradictory demands! No steady intelligent appeal built up by disciplined experience, taking wise and careful measure of the achievements that are one by one disclosing their possibility, counting the reasons, serious in the consciousness of a divine task. Alas! that is not the appeal that goes up towards God. No appeal of a trustful child, anxious to be loyal to the Father's wish, no appeal inspired by that veracity and that security which the perfect understanding of responsive love can alone secure. No; sin has disturbed the even flow of men's desires, and they no longer set themselves along the steady channels that would bear them onward to their destined position; and the voices that rise from the lower floods are broken and turbulent and lost. Man has lost the secret of asking, and the demands he makes on God are the issue of a distracted will. He asks—he knows not what he asks. No moral standard governs and trains his expectation of what God may do for him, or what he may fitly make request before God for. So the earth is full of a swarm of prayers. The times of man's ignorance God winked at, content if He could lift the fashion of men's habitual appeals to Him into some nearer harmony with His own will, into the temple service of His people through whom He prepared the advent of the Mediator.

II. Now, at last, we are told in the words of my text, there is to be a change. A principle is to assert itself, which will sift, and test, and ordain, until all will be built together in articulate speech. The name of Jesus; that is the energy which will move over these waters so formless and void, under the plastic touch of which the whole fabric should grow up together into a seemly whole. 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will give it you.' 'My name.' That name is to put all man's askings to the proper proof. Now we know how to ask, and what to ask. Before we tossed up, as it were, every passionate need that throbbed in our heart, it was enough that we prayed, and then to make our request good we did this or that which dim tradition authorised; we ran with fruit or flowers, or slew a bullock, while perhaps we said, 'We will cry aloud for fear God is asleep; we will do the things that seem to please Him, lest He be angry or malicious, or unkind.' So it has been all a dark and doubtful experiment, but now we know the name of Jesus must determine all. Under that name alone can a petition be sanctioned.

The name of Jesus is to bring its power to bear upon our requests in two or three special ways. First, we know it is redemptive, for poor, blind wants that we bring before God are in themselves so beside the mark, we have lost the instinct of asking right; we have

let selfishness, and wilfulness, and dishonourable appetite disturb spiritual insight, and we throw out our hopes in vague directions; we cannot make our petitions tally with the deep rule that governs all Christian prayer, the rule that our heavenly Father knows what we need before we ask. He knows exactly; He never requires to be told; He knows, and He waits only to give out just what our being wants the moment we give Him the chance by our desire for it. So God, knowing all that we have need of, has all in perfect readiness if only we could open the channel and feel the want of it, and desire it, and ask in prayer for it. Yet we go pressing some silly request; we stumble, groping about; we want this and the other, and all is wrong. We offer unavailing prayers for the wrong thing, and so we grow flushed and angry against God, and our prayer seems useless, aimless, unaccountable, and perplexing. So we pray.

And if we were alone, our prayers could make but little way, could not but be sadly ineffectual and stupid and disappointing; but now the name of Jesus stands over them all. That name never enters the Father's ears without the whole power of love going out to greet it: at the sound of that blessed name the Father's heart is aglow, and that name is now identified with us; it is sealed with us; it spreads itself out over us; it fastens on us, it encompasses us; it binds us into His own life; there we lie in His name, encased and ensconced, and its identity protects us, and its force overflows us. We are in Jesus, Jesus in us; His name is ours; he is not ashamed to gather us up into Himself, and therefore our requests go up inside His; they enter into heaven through His mouth and from His lips; He takes them from us and makes them His own, and so they are purged of their contempt, they are redeemed from their natural shame. Over and above our thin beseechings there pleads the mighty voice of the Intercessor; we become acceptable in the Beloved. We can only picture by images the deep effect of this; but we can, at least, imagine what it may mean if we picture the Father listening to our poor prayers with just the same loving attention and devotion as if Jesus Christ Himself offered them.

It is very hard to pray. We feel so hopelessly small, insignificant and powerless, so ignorant, so short-sighted, so shut out in such grim silence, feeling what is it we should say, and what is for our good, and if we knew and could utter it, what good could we do! Yet, feeble and stammering though our lips be, it is in the name of Jesus that we pray—inside His name, not outside in the cold, beseeching some remote and hidden God within, and it is from a heart glowing and outflowing that He hearkens to our petitions, and bends Himself to our prayers. And we pray in that name. It is not only redemptive in winning for us a favourable hearing, but it is regula-

tive also in fashioning our prayers. We pray within the energy of that living name. We must conform our nature to His model. Slowly we have to suffer this name of Jesus to pass over our anxious understandings, our feverish needs, and to instil into them its coolness, its steadiness, its rhythm. Its governing force will select and prune and modify; it will, indeed, forgive, and compassionate, and pity, as hot words come from our lips; but it will not be satisfied with passing over and forgiving; it will aim at better things; it will wait until the heat of impassioned longing is done, and straighten much that is crooked. It will wait for us to pray better. Our wants depend on our character, and as our inner character yields to the discipline of the name, our wants will signalise the growing change, they will become more and more comformable to the mind of Christ; more and more we should be accustomed to offer our petitions in His name. 'Would my Lord Jesus offer this petition on my behalf? Could I imagine myself framing it in His presence? Can I genuinely ask the Father to receive it as from the lips of Jesus Himself? Is my prayer of that kind?' So alone do I pray in His name. CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

The Consolation of Religion.

These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace.
S. JOHN xvi. 33.

THE subject is the consolation of religion. A wise man wrote a book once about the consolations of philosophy. No doubt he discovered a great many philosophical consolations. One of the difficulties, however, about that sort of consolation is that one must be a philosopher to appreciate it. Philosophy is for the wise.

The old philosophers, the Epicureans and the Stoics, whom S. Paul met at Athens, taught an immense deal of truth; and the truth they taught was exceedingly helpful and uplifting. Put the best teachings of those two philosophers together and you get a very fair imitation of Christianity. But the Epicureans and the Stoics never got much influence over the people. They lived in the most irreligious and immoral era of all history, and included nearly all the good men of their day, and they were always trying, as we say, to 'reach the masses.' But they never succeeded. With all their truth and all their goodness, the world around them still went on believing lies and following the devil, absolutely uninfluenced.

Philosophy is able to console the philosophers only when they stand in no great need of consolation. Philosophy is an excellent religion for cultured people—in fair weather.

When the skies shine and business is prosperous, and there is money in the bank, and home is pleasant and books are friendly, and nobody is sick, and no sense of sin darkens the past or the future—why, then, if one is philosophically inclined, and 'up' to that sort of interesting speculating, philosophy may, perhaps, give all the consolation that is needed. Philosophy, that is, is an admirable consolation when there is no sorrow.

But let the skies be overcast; let trouble follow trouble in funereal procession along the way of life; let discouragement, and doubt, and discord, and doctors' bills, and death come in to take away all delight and desire of living; let the sense of sin and the necessity of salvation get hold upon the conscience, and where are the consolations of philosophy? What can the philosopher say beside the sick-bed and the death-bed? The only thing I know that he can say out of his honest heart is that cry which Pliny uttered in the midst of his bitter bereavement—Pliny himself a philosopher of the philosophers—'Oh, for some strong and abiding consolation!' In the presence of the real sorrows of life, in the face of death, in the sight of sin, philosophy is simply dumb. There is no strong and abiding consolation in philosophy even for philosophers.

Philosophy is all down here on the earth. There is no voice in it speaking out of the sky. It has nothing to say to us about God, or about the life beyond the grave. Its teaching is entirely ethical; its concern is with daily conduct. That sort of teaching is immensely important, and that concern ought to be the chief concern—and was in Christ's day—of the Christian religion. But you have got to have something more than that in a life which has death at the end of it and the mystery of pain all through it.

I. 'Comfort ye, comfort ye My people' is the errand on which the ministers of the Christian Church are sent. 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden' is the gracious invitation which they bring. 'And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself . . . shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.'

II. Consider the Christian revelation of divine love.

'The Father Himself loveth you.—The very hairs of your head are all numbered.—In the world ye shall have tribulation; the disciple shall be as his Master; and yet, peace I leave with you, let not your heart be troubled.' Come unto Me and learn of Me, He said who

came from God to tell us what God is. 'God is love,' said he whom the Master taught. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' asks another disciple; 'shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?' And he answers his own question: 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' The disciple who said that knew the consolation of religion.

III. Consider also the Christian revelation of the life to come.

Everybody knows what a consolation there is in hope. We are saved by hope, S. Paul says. All the doctors know how true that is. And all the rest of us know, too, how hope brings strength, makes endurance possible, and, taking tired travellers by the hand, leads them to the end of their journey. The task does not seem so hard if there is a reward worth working for at the end of it. The pain is not quite so bitter under the surgeon's knife if health seems likely to come after it. No ill condition is quite unbearable if it is tempered with hope. Hope is a universal consolation.

Human life is so lamentably out of balance, full of injustice, people so seldom get their full deserts of good or ill, the world is such a disordered tangle, that another world seems a logical necessity. Or else God puts us to intellectual and spiritual confusion. A life to come is the best explanation we can think of for a thousand strange conditions. The truth of the very central assertion of all religion, the truth of the existence of God, seems to demand, if we may so say, for the justification of God Himself that there be a world beyond the grave.

Otherwise God is not love, cares not whether we serve Him or curse Him, distributes benedictions and maledictions without regard to character, suffers the saint to go miserable and the sinner to go happy into a common grave, sets Cæsar on a throne and Christ on a cross, and answers the defiance of one and the love and faith of the other with the same answer—the answer of impartial and unending death.

The dead are not dead. Death is but the lifting of the veil which hangs between us and the larger life. By-and-bye there is a meeting again, and no separation after that for ever. For those who have served God there will be no crying in that other country. Only keep heart and work on in the midst of tribulation. 'I will come again and receive you unto Myself,' He said, in whom we put our hope. And that will be the beginning of life and joy eternal.

GEORGE HODGES.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Tribulation and Peace.

These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. S. JOHN xvi. 33.

IN these few words of the text our Lord reminds His disciples of the evils which would attend them in their Christian pilgrimage, of the sure and certain remedy for those evils, and of the cause and manner of its efficacy. As the subject is one which applies to every follower of the Cross through all ages, we shall do well to draw from it for our own use all the instruction and comfort which it evidently contains.

I. 'In the world ye shall have tribulation.' He who was 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,' 'He who knew what was in man,' and 'needed not that any should tell Him,' had been to His disciples the kindest and most indulgent of masters, leaving them in His own person an example how they should love one another. He was now, however, going to leave them to the world; to the most cruel, hard, and selfish of all masters. 'If ye were of the world,' He told them, 'the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' They were now, then, to contend with more than the common evils of life. They had on them the badge of Christ. They lived at enmity with the maxims, principles, and practices of the world; and were therefore singled out for the rancorous envy, malice, and hatred of the world. Their case is, therefore, unlike our own. It was far more trying than the condition of the very best among ourselves, under any, the very greatest, afflictions. Still, to us also the truth, considered generally, is most applicable. 'In the world we shall have tribulation.' No man can entirely escape it. It 'cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth it spring out of the ground.' In this transitory state, it should be received as part of our fallen lot. 'While the flesh of man is upon him,' says Job, 'he shall be sorrowful; and while his soul is in him, it shall mourn.' His mind, his body and estate, as well as all his earthly relations, shall be to him respectively, at one time or other, a source of misery. And in truth, the common accidents and concerns of life; his own cares, and the cares of those dear to him; the changes and reverses of fortune, as they are called; the privations and losses incident to every state; the weaning of the heart, by times and emergencies, from beloved objects closely endeared to him, and still more by their deaths—these and similar interruptions of a man's peace, tell him plainly that this is a life of trial and sorrow, and that all who exist here are subject to one kind of tribulation or another.

II. The only refuge in these distresses and diseases of the soul is that held forth to man in the text, 'In Me ye shall have peace.' To the worldly, for a time at least, blinded as they are by the dazzling pomps and pageants of their idol, its wealth and patronage, its pleasures and distinctions, the offer of peace would seem superfluous. The round of their joys, the excitement of their minds, would be utterly ruined by the peace of the gospel. But to the Christian the consolation of his Saviour's promise is most precious. He has seen the end of those things on which so many set their hearts. He is conscious to himself of the need of rest, of peace, to his soul. He acknowledges the yoke of our fallen nature and of his own sorrows. From within and from without he is frequently disquieted; and too often the burden of infirmity and corruption weighs heavily upon his spirits. He therefore avails himself of the privilege of a Christian, and implores peace from his Saviour. Not that he expects to be altogether relieved from the common lot of humanity, or to be removed out of the world, or to have his mind and feelings as it were deadened and blunted to all that befals him. This would be to expect a miraculous exemption from the discipline and trials which belong, by divine appointment, to this our existence. He asks not therefore anything so absurd as to be put out of the reach of tribulation. He merely asks that peculiar kind of support under it promised by Christ Himself, and called, by way of eminence and distinction, His peace. 'My peace I leave with you,' said He to His disciples; 'My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' To explain the nature of this heavenly gift completely, either as to its kind, operation, or mode of communication, is beyond the power of man; for it 'passeth all understanding.' Even those who experience it cannot minutely describe it. It is quite enough that they are so upheld, strengthened, and comforted as to feel a rest and tranquillity under every affliction, care, and privation. While others are dismayed and overwhelmed by the violence of the storm, they look out upon the raging of the elements with calmness and security. While others are cast down, they are of good cheer. While to the worldly and unbelieving there is darkness on every side, even 'darkness that may be felt,' the thick glooms of doubt and wretchedness and despair, to them, as to the children of Israel, there is 'light in their dwellings.' They enjoy a wonderful sense of God's presence and favourable regard. There is in them a mixed feeling of love and confidence and gratitude and safety, which creates serenity and peace. They testify with the Apostle, that though 'troubled on every side, they are not distressed; though perplexed, they are not in despair; though persecuted, they are not forsaken.' Or with David, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I

will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me'; that is, the consciousness that Thou art my Shepherd, and that I am under Thy defence and guidance, affords me ample consolation. They are convinced that 'all things work together for good to them'; that the wicked 'could have no power, if it were not given them of God'; that their triumph is short'; that 'the Lord loveth whom He chasteneth'; and that the man is blessed who endureth trials and temptations; 'for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.' Such, then, is 'the rest, and such the refreshing,' promised by Christ. He will speak peace to His people, and to His saints.' 'The work of righteousness shall be peace: and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.' If, then, 'in the world they have tribulation,' 'in Christ they have peace.' The poison and the antidote come together. 'With the temptation, they have a way to escape.' If God 'maketh sore, He also bindeth up: if he woundeth, His hands make whole.'

III. If the question be here asked, by whose means mankind have obtained this blessing, and in what manner has it been secured to us? the text supplies us with an answer: 'In Me ye shall have peace; for I have overcome the world.' It is the great Atonement wrought by our Redeemer, and His glorious triumph over death, the world, and the ghostly enemy of man, that have entailed upon us all our privileges. The world and all its evils, which so heavily and fearfully beset our gracious Lord and Saviour, in a conflict upon which depended all our hopes, were utterly vanquished by His Resurrection. That same Almighty power, which 'left not His soul in hell, neither suffered His Holy One to see corruption,' did at the same time give an earnest of every blessing to the good, confirm all His promises, and teach His followers under every change and chance and calamity of this world to 'be of good cheer,' and to 'possess their souls in patience' and 'in peace.' Sorrow, therefore, to them has lost its bitterness, death its sting, the grave its victory. He who 'put all things under His feet,' subdued also for them these great enemies of their peace; nay, He has done more, He has mercifully given them of His own; and that, 'not as the world giveth,' a transient, sensual, unsubstantial repose, but real spiritual, unalienable, and everlasting peace.

A. B. EVANS.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Function of the Gospels.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. S. JOHN xxi. 25.

I. ALL the Christian religion depends upon is an actual communion between the believing soul and the living Christ. Not in reading about Him, or hearing about Him, or remembering the things that He once did, or being convinced that He really did them; or in admiration for His historical character; or in approving the excellence of His teaching; or in a touching sentiment for the beautiful drama once enacted by Him who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down into the Virgin's womb, and was made Man, and suffered under Pontius Pilate—not in any of these does the religion of Christ exist. It begins and ends wholly in an active and energetic contact between the person of Jesus Christ and the person of His followers; a contact begun in baptism, realised in confirmation, discovered in conversion, fulfilled in the Holy Communion, fed and nourished by the incessant actuality of prayer, aspirations, pleadings, pardons, as the soul travels point by point along the pathway of salvation, and is faithful to the handling of its Redeemer and King. The whole secret is here. The whole meaning of everything is to know Jesus Christ—to know Him as a will who governs us, to know Him as a lover whom we worship. There is no other end or aim in our religion than that.

Now, if this is so, what is wanted in the written record? Not to meet every perplexity beforehand; not to explain all the expressions used; not to be a complete statement of all that Christ has to say to us. No; for He will Himself be with us to guide and explain. He will have much to say hereafter that we cannot bear now. He will Himself be ever completing what is now only begun. He will Himself uphold us through perplexities that cannot be avoided. And there must be nothing in the record that will tend to take the place of this living Lord, nothing that will seem sufficient of itself without Him. The one thing wanted is knowledge of Him who is our invisible friend—knowledge of Him; not merely of what He said or did, but of Him—of Him as a personality, as a character. It was His character which He revealed in His incarnate acts—His eternal character, made known in a visible stage, through definite or intelligible acts of will. We must, by help of the Gospel, know Him as a living being, as a breathing human friend; who could be spoken to, delighted in, as Man; loved and adored as God.

II. This friend of ours, gone away through the grave or gate of

death, is not, indeed, as our other dead friends. He is alive, and comes to us. But He is out of our sight; and we want to feel as if we knew Him who draws near us under the veil. And here are the records, which propose to make Him intelligible, make Him intimate, make Him vivid, as a personal friend, remembered in just the same fashion as we should recall our own friend.

And is this not exactly what they do succeed in doing? Read them; and whatever else may puzzle you as to what the Gospels mean by this or that phrase, or as to what He did on such and such a day, is it not made absolutely clear to you what type of man He was? Do you not become certain of the sort of effect He would make upon you? Are you not intensely conscious of being in the presence of one whose character preserves a steady and emphatic identity, which you cannot confuse with anybody else; which has a particular or unmistakable tinge of individuality, through which you feel that you could identify Him anywhere. 'That is so like Him!' you can say. 'That has a ring about it, a flavour, an accent, which I could recognise anywhere. That is Jesus of Nazareth. I know Him, as I know a personal friend. If He were to come again, if He were to enter into the room and speak, I should know that it was the same whom these Gospels tell me about. Their portrait would make Him entirely familiar; so strong is the impression which they produce of a personal presence—actual, concrete, consistent, uniform, alive; whose each word, or look, or gesture enables me to cry out, "That is He! That is Jesus!"'

How do they manage to do this? Mainly by fixing attention on the cardinal scenes in which the deepest significance of His character came to the front, His trial, judgment, and death. That was the moment of moments in which He made manifest the secret of His life; in which everything in Him was put under sharpest tests, and gave experience of its quality and temper. For this He had been sent into the world, 'the work that His Father sent Him to do.' On it His whole self was concentrated; in the fiery light that thus beat down upon Him, all was revealed that made Him our Master and our King. This, then, is the chief, the dominant thing, that the Gospels set themselves to tell. A third of their whole narrative is occupied with it. Every incident, word, detail, is brought out vividly and at length. A character, we have said, is known best in its greatest crises. Then it is that it always gives proof of its permanent type. So here. If you know Jesus in His awful Agony, His bloody Passion, you know Him as He is for ever. You are inside His life. You are in possession of His secret. Always, and on all occasions, He will be the same whom at that hour you recognised and loved and worshipped.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

The Gospels have this one aim, to enable us to know who it is in whom we are asked to believe. 'To know Him whom we have believed'; 'to know God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent'; 'These things are written that ye may know of the truth.' That is the whole business. It is natural enough for us to wish to have more written. But do we not deceive ourselves if we think that, by having more, we should have our perplexities cleared, our hesitations dismissed? The longest book, the clearest statements, by themselves, must still fail to solve the difficulties, if the sense of who it is that speaks is absent. The Jews heard more and saw more than we have in our hands to-day, and they were only the more baffled and the more determined in their hostility. Judas saw and heard far more —saw and heard all these many things which John has left unwritten; and, after all, he went away and communed with the chief priests how he might betray Him for thirty pieces of silver.

No! there is enough in our brief Gospels to challenge us with a living presence which we must face; and, having faced, must either follow or flee. And it is not the book, but that living presence, in which we are to believe, on which we are to rely. That is its moral challenge. There it stands and moves and speaks. We can all feel it, as it draws near, as it passes by. That is the voice that speaks through the written records—speaks as none other ever spoke. It is the voice of a living Man, not of a book—using a book through which to speak, but Himself the key of the written Word; Himself the power in the book; Himself the argument, the appeal; Himself the soul of the record. Though all the books that the world could contain were written about Him, the situation would still be the same. At the end, when we had read them all, the one question would remain to be answered. 'After all that has been written, wilt thou follow Me; wilt thou trust Me; wilt thou obey Me; wilt thou put thy soul in My hands?'

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

IV OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Wells which we digged not.

Houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not. DEUT. vi. 11.

N the chapters of Deuteronomy which we read to-day, Moses is doing for the Israelites as a nation what we might do for ourselves or for others in respect of our smaller lives—helping them to anticipate experience, to paint beforehand their coming responsibilities, lest they should fall short of them. This is to be one feature of their life and their responsibility, and it is one that finds echoes and analogies in our own experience.

I. They were not pioneers, going to break up virgin soil, to make homes in a wilderness where human life had never yet found resting-place. They were going to inherit the toil of others. It is a condition which if faced and realised must bring with it some solemn thoughts. In their case there was an additional consideration. They were not succeeding, as by the law of nature all succeed, to the heritage of predecessors. Their wealth was to be founded on the disgrace and disinheritance of others. God was dispossessing in their favour an ancient people with the accumulated stores of a long civilisation. Moses warns them of the dangers of this position. It imposes upon them high obligations ; but it might not only fail to make them conscious of these, it might actually minister to base impulses, to pride, ingratitude, sloth. As a protection against these, he exhorts them always to remember how and why they had been put in possession of these good things—not for their own merits. Three thoughts are suggested to the Israelites as to this bountiful provision of comforts and instruments, which they were to find ready to their hands in the Promised Land.

1. They were all God's undeserved gifts to them. They had not earned them any more than they had provided them for themselves. They must receive them as at His hand, to be used in His service.

2. So far as they were owed at all, they were owed not to them but to pious ancestors, another item added to the debt not to be discharged, another link to bind generations together.

3. They had changed hands once because their possessors had misused them. The new possessors could not remember this without

having the reflection forced home to them that they too held God's gifts on trust and might forfeit them.

II. Is not this a type and parable of all human life? 'Houses full of good things, which thou filledst not, wells digged, which thou diggedst not.'

What a tiny fraction of all that makes life pleasant or interesting or beautiful is what any one generation adds to it by its own energy or deserves by its own virtues. We are the heirs of the ages. And yet how hard we find it to put ourselves back and realise that what comes to us so easily, comforts that we can hardly imagine foregoing, knowledge that seems to us elementary, ideas which seem to lie at the bottom of all our thinking, are the earnings of the hard toil, brave effort, patient thought, of years long gone by. 'Others,' very many others, 'have laboured,' the forgotten workers and thinkers of long centuries, and 'we have entered into their labours.'

And yet once more—of our individual lives. There after all is the root. It is there that the mischief is first found, the pride and ingratitude and sloth which mar afterwards the life of societies.

What have we 'that we did not receive'? And why did we receive it? 'Houses full of good things that ye filled not!'

Think specially of the greatest and most sacred of human societies to which we were admitted in the first hours of our life—taken into Christ's arms, blessed by Him, given back to our earthly parents to be brought up for Him as sons of God, with all the riches of His grace around us, the sense of forgiveness, the promise of His help, perpetual access to Him in prayer and communion, the comfort of His word, the sure hope of His Resurrection.

Why has God given us all these blessings? Not for anything that we have done; for be our lives good or bad, the gifts are most of them antecedent to any conduct of our own that could explain them.

But surely we do owe them in great part, under His good providence, to the prayers and efforts and high unselfish purposes of those who have gone before us—to loving, faithful, Christian parents, to 'founders and benefactors,' not in the narrower senses, but in the larger sense of all who in their time and sphere have worked for the permanent good of men, and done their part, large or small, in building up the fabric of ordered and Christian life.

E. C. WICKHAM.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Central Truth of Biblical Religion.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. DEUTERONOMY vi. 4-7.

THIS passage may be said to contain the central truth and the central precept of biblical religion. No doubt both the truth and the precept received further development in the course of revelation. The truth 'the Lord thy God is one Lord' was explained by the further manifestation of the threefold personality contained within the unity, while the command to love the God so revealed was extended by the second great commandment which was like unto it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

But in both cases the development depends on the original revelation. The full revelation of the Trinity could only be made upon the foundation of a deeply rooted faith in the unity of God; and the love of man, essential as it is to all true religion, was taught by our Lord and His Apostles as part of the great primal duty of love to God. 'This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.' 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these little ones, ye have done it unto Me.' The love of man is no substitute for love of God, but rests upon it and pre-supposes it, and thus the whole of religion theoretical and practical may be said to depend upon the original declaration: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.'

They are words so familiar to us that it may seem strange to assert that the truth as well as the command contained in them has been proved by experience to be singularly difficult of apprehension by the human mind. But the whole history of the religious training of Israel shows that these words needed the continual reiteration which the passage before us prescribes before they could become part of the religious conscience of the chosen race. 'These words shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.' Yet

we know how in spite of this they fell away to other gods, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth, and Moloch, and the hosts of diverse and conflicting deities which the human imagination has conceived to account for the manifold phenomena of the universe. So hard is it to grasp and retain the primal truth, 'The Lord our God is one Lord.'

And in proportion as they lost hold of it did their national life fade and wither, till the great captivity proved the truth of the prophetic warnings against apostasy. Throughout the Old Testament the foundation of true social welfare is declared to be the knowledge and the love of God. And when the horizon broadens into the world-wide Kingdom of God which was proclaimed by Jesus Christ, the knowledge and the love of God are still the conditions of all true life whether individual or social. 'This is eternal life, that they might know Thee the only true God.' The precept of the text, reiterated throughout the Old Testament, is taken up and developed in the New. Love, in its threefold aspects, the love of God for man, and man for God, and the love of man for man in God, becomes the whole of religion.

I. Now we must notice that, simple and familiar as these words and ideas are to us, the declaration of the unity of God was at the time that it was proclaimed a new and startling dogma. By dogma I mean an authoritative statement of a truth unattainable by the ordinary processes of human reason or perception. But even if we use the word in what has been lately called the more ordinary modern sense by which any assertion which a controversialist does not like or will not believe is called dogmatic, it still remains true that at the time that it was made the declaration, 'The Lord our God is one Lord,' was a dogma. Here was a people surrounded on all sides by other nations, other religions, other gods, by people closely related to kindred races, a people but lately emerged from a bondage in which they had almost become a portion of the great and civilised Egyptian community with its elaborate and organised faith; and to these people it was declared that they were to discard all alien religions whatsoever, to put away every vestige of belief in other deities, and to exalt the God of their fathers into a sole and unapproachable supremacy, being linked together and separated from all other men by an exclusive and intolerant faith.

The declaration on which this distinctive religious life was founded was surely the *ne plus ultra* of dogma. Can we not imagine how it would have appeared to the tolerant vagueness of modern thought? 'It is all very well,' it would have been urged, 'it is all very well to hold your own belief, but when proscribing the beliefs of others, may not these different deities be after all the same power under

different names? and may not men find satisfaction to their religious impulses in worshipping that special aspect of the divine nature that appeals to them even though it may not appeal to others? After all, Baal seems to suit the Sidonian character, and the highest aspirations of the Moabite are expressed in Chemosh. Surely we may look for the happy day when all faiths shall be fused into one, and we find a common ground in the elements common to all religions. Let us worship Jehovah by all means, but it is best to refrain from dogmatic assertion as to His nature, for in declaring that "the Lord our God is one Lord," we are explicitly denying the other gods, and framing that most mischievous of formulas, an exclusive dogma.' So would the faith of Israel have appeared to many in our day, and so it did appear to the philosophical and worldly minds of later heathen who blamed the heathen for their exclusive faith, and wondered at a religion without a pantheon, and a deity who was above all things a jealous God.

II. And what was this great dogmatic assertion? Was it a generally accepted truth, or was it a truth which when once declared could be readily corroborated by experience and observation? On the contrary the dogma of the unity of God was in almost direct contradiction of the facts of the world and of life as the ancient mind conceived them. The infinite variety of the universe, its bewildering multiplicity of experience made it easy for primitive man to assign to every hill and river its own divinity, and to explain the manifold appearances in heaven and earth by a theory of gods many and lords many. It is only gradually and by a laborious process that reason has in this overtaken revelation, and indeed we might almost say that it has been reserved for our own nation and our own time to complete the course which has led from polytheism to monotheism. The scientific confirmation of the Mosaic utterance is found in Newton's proof of the unity of force throughout the universe, and in Darwin's theory of the unity of life. Whatever other hypotheses may be made in the future it is impossible at least to ascribe to more than one supreme mind the origin or the maintenance of the universe, which is knit together by the one force of gravitation, in the development of the most diverse forms of life by the one law of evolution. But in proving this, science has re-echoed in its own language, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.'

It is a dogma, then, that lies at the foundation of the Jewish and therefore also of the Christian religion. For when the Israelite was commanded to 'love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength, and mind,' it was to no vague emotion alone that he was called, but to the love of a divine object, of a personal God whose unique nature had just been declared to him.

Practical religion, then, rests on dogma: from an unbroken chain we can trace the love of man dependent upon the love of God, and the love of God resulting from our knowledge of Him and what He is.

But modern thought rejects dogma; sometimes, no doubt, on the ground that this or that dogma is not true, but more often in our days on the ground that these are matters of which we know nothing, and that therefore we must be content with a vague feeling of awe towards the great force that works in nature and in man, and a vague emotion of benevolence or love towards all that He or it has made. No one can study the various utterances of contemporary speculation on religious subjects without seeing that the old definite opposition between faith on the one hand and unbelief on the other has given place on both sides to a common agreement that though nothing can be known of the force that lies behind the world of sense, we yet can reverence and even love the unknowable God, provided we think of Him only as manifesting Himself in the natural course of the universe and in the historical development of human society. Men are coming to believe no longer in a God in whom we live, and move, and have our being, but in a God who lives, and moves, and has His being in us, and they call themselves religious and even Christian if they can persuade themselves that they love the tendency that makes for righteousness or for civilisation or for the greatest happiness to the greatest number. It is to this that we seem to be reducing the profound love of the Psalmists, the intense faith of the prophets. 'My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.' 'Like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear Him.' 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison with Thee.' 'Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer. Thy name is from everlasting.' 'His compassions fail not, they are new every morning.' 'The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him.' 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.'

III. The contrast of such utterances as this with our modern ways of thinking and speaking about religion is striking enough, and to what is it due? I cannot now consider all the complex tendencies which come home to make men shrink from dogmatic religion, but I will take two main causes.

In the first place, there is the feeling that in speaking of God as a person we are reducing Him to our own level, and making man the measure not only of the universe, but of the Creator Himself. Therefore men speak of force and law and providence rather than of a personal God, the Father and Redeemer of our souls. Therefore

they look for Him and the tokens of His presence not in the silent experiences of the individual soul communing with God, 'who is about my path and about my bed, and spieth out all my ways,' but they look for Him in the general movement and evolution of the world, in the forces which are working towards some unknown future goal, in the dim strivings of the poor and the oppressed, in the labour movement, in democracy, or in Socialism. All these tendencies claim to have God on their side, not simply as the prophets would have said because they have right and justice in them, and God is righteous and just, but because they think they are one with the force that moves the world, they are in the great stream-tendency which is flowing we know not whither.

Now we do not deny that God is in the world, and that the great onward march of things is ruled by Him, but we do deny that He is in it so as to be indistinguishable from it; for we declare as Christians, as the inheritors of the faith of Israel, that the God whom we worship is a personal Being who loves us with a personal love, and whom we also can love with all our human faculties, and heart and mind and soul and strength.

Is this to reduce God to man's level? In ascribing personality to Him are we thinking of Him as of a man? Let us not shrink from the charge. I must think of God as a living, loving person, for life and love and personality are the highest things I know, although I know them by my experience of man, and as a man. If you can show me anything in the sphere of human knowledge nobler than the noblest man, more venerable than the purest human virtue, wiser than the keenest human intellect, more loveable than human love, I will clothe with its qualities my thoughts of God. But till then I will think of Him under the human aspects of righteousness and mercy and holiness and love, though I know that His holiness is purer than the purest, and His love tenderer than the tenderest of human love. In a word, personality sums up all that is best in our experience, and therefore we believe that God is a person. And we claim that this belief is justified by the facts of the universe so far as we know them. We trace in the order of creation the workings of an intelligence similar though immeasurably superior to our own reason, while the spiritual experiences of individual souls assure us that in the Being with whom we have to do there is the quality which we know as love. The God whom we dimly surmise is a personal God. And when we turn from the guesses of natural religion to the fact of the Incarnation we find the same truth declared in Him who is the express image of the person of God; for the Man Christ Jesus is for us the revelation of the divine nature: 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.'

Then, again, men shrink from dogmatic religion because they are above all things tolerant, and toleration has come to mean letting men believe what they will without any attempt at outside interference or influence whatsoever. Religion, it is said, is a matter of faith, and we must put no pressure on faith. But the very essence of dogma is that it is authoritative. It comes to us with the authority at least of experience, and we hold that faith is so personal a thing that it must not be influenced even by the lessons of another's experience. So we not only refrain from pressing our convictions in the old-fashioned way on our friends and equals, but we are coming to shrink even from teaching our children the foundation truths of religion because they are dogmas. I believe it to be a fact that in all classes of society children are taught less and less religious truth every day. And if it be said that this is only because schools have undertaken the task, I answer that in many of the largest schools, in nearly all the day-schools of the country, practically no religious teaching whatever is given, while in others, from elementary schools upwards, as we all know, there is an increasing tendency to limit the instruction to undogmatic or undenominational religion. Now behind this tendency is the feeling that it is wrong to dogmatise, that is, to convey religious truth authoritatively even to the young; that they must be left to find their own way among the mysteries of the spiritual world. Give them, it is said, the facts of Bible history, and let them form their own judgment as to the doctrines to be deduced from them. Well, at all events, whatever may be said of this system of education, it is not the method of the Bible. 'These words which I command you,' it says, 'shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children: and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.' The truth is, that one who is really convinced in his own heart of divine truths, and has had personal experience of the love of God, and has attained to even a lowly grade in the spiritual life—such an one cannot refrain from teaching what he knows of God. 'O come hither and hear me, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul.' 'One generation shall praise Thy works to another and declare Thy power: the memorial of Thine abundant kindness shall be shown.' And the power and the goodness of God, what He hath done for my soul, cannot be told without dogmatic teaching, which is nothing but the accumulated experience of faithful hearts to whom God has revealed Himself by personal contact. Why are they to keep these things to themselves, these things that they know as certainly as they know their own existence? Is not the real secret of our shrinking from dogmatic religion, is it not

that most of us are not certain of it, that we have no spiritual history upon which we can look back as the Israelites looked back on the time when they were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and therefore we cannot tell others what the Lord hath done for our souls.

But there have been, and there are still souls who know God, whose eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts, and from them, from prophet and psalmist and Apostle and seer and saint, has been gathered the record of the revelation made to them which men contemptuously call dogma. If we, who have received this sacred trust, do not transmit it to them who come after, that their posterity may know it, and the children that are yet unborn, we shall be cutting away the foundation on which practical religion, the love of God, and the love of man, can alone be built up. Ask those who know, and they will tell you that the love of man, the true enthusiasm of humanity, by which I do not mean the reformer's instinct for mere social order and improvement—that the love of man is inspired by the love of God within us. Ask them again, and they will tell you that we cannot love what we do not know, and that dim and imperfect as our insight into spiritual truth must always be, it is yet the condition of that absorbing affection, that yearning of the whole nature of man for God which is the goal of our spiritual life on earth. To us then as to the Israelite of old, dogmatic truth is the foundation of life. 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.'

A. T. LYTTELTON.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

V. OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Church Building and Church Decoration.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? S. JOHN xii. 3.

ONLY remember reading in the Old Testament of two collections being made, and both of these were for what we might call church building and church decoration. The one we shall find at the end of the Book of Exodus, and the other at the end of 1 Chronicles. The first was made by Moses under the special direction of God Himself. Part of the object that God had in leading His people through the wilderness was to train them in the belief of His own nearness to them. And as an outward sign of His presence, He willed to have a tabernacle amongst them—a tent among their tents, though apart from them, where solemn services might be held, and where God and His people might meet. It was to be among their tents as the church stands among other houses in town or village; and as it was the tent set apart for the worship of God, it was to be better than other tents, more beautiful, more glorious—so beautiful and glorious that we are told God Himself designed the pattern, and ordered the furniture thereof.

We in our clumsy stupidity are thinking sometimes that the fittings and furniture of our places of worship are matters of such little moment that we wonder how people can occupy themselves about such trifles. And yet I suppose we should say that this account in Exodus of the fitting up of the first place of worship we ever hear of was a true account. And, if true, what are we to make of it? Surely, if there is any meaning to it, it is that every least thing that has to do with the service of God is of far more consequence than we suppose.

I. Over and over again was it said to Moses, 'Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the Mount.' 'Thou shalt rear up the Tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was showed thee in the Mount.' 'As it was showed thee in the Mount, so shalt thou make it.' 'According to

the pattern which the Lord had showed Moses, so he made the candlestick.' And this work of God's tabernacle, so beautiful, nay, so divine, was to depend for its accomplishment on the freewill offerings of the men, women, and children of the people of Israel. This is the more remarkable, coming, as it does, in the midst of all the wonders that God wrought in the sight of His people. They were living, so to speak, in an atmosphere of supernatural wonders. The bread from heaven; the water out of the stony rock; the thunderings and lightnings of Mount Sinai; the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud. In the midst of all these it is worth notice that God, in the erection of a place of worship, did not dispense with the help of the people themselves, but invited their co-operation. Bezaleel and Aholiab and other skilled mechanics were chosen to fashion the holy things according to the divine pattern; and for the furnishing of the material, the collection was ordered to be made amongst the people. 'Speak unto the children of Israel, said God, that they bring Me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering.' And so Moses reported, 'This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord, gold, silver, brass, and blue and purple and scarlet and fine linen and precious stones.' This was the message. How did the people answer it? 'And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the Tabernacle'; and they came, both men and women, some with bracelets and earrings, some with jewels of gold. Those women who could work with their hands the blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen, brought that which they had worked. So eager were they, and full of enthusiasm; so determined were they that their place of worship should be as beautiful as hand could make it; so regardless of expense were they in all connected with it, that we read that the workmen at last spoke unto Moses, saying, 'The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the Lord commanded to make.' And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, 'Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary.' So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

II. So it was with that other great collection that was made by David to build a temple for the Lord God of Israel. The same spirit pervaded both king and people, as had done before their fore-

fathers in the Wilderness. To the glory of God and in grateful memory of all that God had done for them, were both the Tabernacle and the Temple erected—the freewill offering of a glad and thankful people. And God accepted it of them. Has all this been done away with and rendered needless by the coming of Jesus Christ? It is a question worth our serious consideration; for, without a doubt, there are some few earnest-minded people—though many more of whom this could not be said—who grudge the expenditure of our best on the building or decoration of the house of God. It is well for us to be sure, then, of our ground. Would our Lord, if He were among us, encourage such expenditure? Is there any word or act of His when He lived here to guide us in the matter? Two instances there are in His life in which His attention was called to acts of lavish expenditure on objects which some in our own day would certainly say had no practical use. They were extreme cases. The one an offering of a poor woman: the other the offering of a rich one. The one He signalised by unwonted praise: the other He defended from unmerited blame. And on both He passed the gracious word of benediction which has descended through the ages on all those who in like spirit have made their offerings to God.

Just as our Lord was leaving the Temple after His last word of solemn warning and rebuke had been spoken, lingering still as He passed out in one of the outer courts, He noticed the people as they cast their gifts into the treasury. A certain poor widow approaches, modestly, timidly, almost furtively, as if ashamed of being seen, and hiding what she gives as all too small for notice, she casts her farthing in, and hastes to depart. Her action had been marked by Him who sees not as man seeth. He calls to Him His disciples. He bids them mark her well, 'Verily, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.'

How many in Jerusalem, had they known all the circumstances, would have blamed her? Nay, how many would do so to-day? For the treasury was the box into which people cast their offerings for the repairing and adorning of the Temple: and that poor widow's farthing was offered for the same purpose as David's and Solomon's thousands of talents. Surely it would be said that this was needless. Enough from public and private charity, without her trifling contribution. For one who might have praised, probably there would have been ten who would have condemned. But other eyes are on her than those of earthly prudence: and another sentence than one of condemnation is passed. Broad and deep in that poor widow's heart had the love of God been shed who was worshipped within those walls. There, beside those gates, had she often waited and worshipped. There had she often come with her burden of trial

meekly borne. There, in that solemn worship, and in the sense of the Divine Presence had she often gained the relief she sought. It was a debt of deep gratitude she owed, the outpouring of a thankful heart. It was a privilege to take any part in such a work. True, it was the veriest trifle she could give. But such as it was, it was willingly and gladly given; and little as she thought of it, there was One across the court who was sitting in judgment upon her who not only approved her deed, but elevated her above all the donors of the day.

CANON LLOYD.

The Law of Liberty.

So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.
S. JAMES ii. 12.

S. PAUL claims as one of the distinguishing blessings of the Gospel, that by it 'the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.' And what is meant by this bondage of corruption he explains when he writes, 'Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness'; and it is clear from other parts of his writings, that he regards the natural condition of mankind to be accurately described by that portion of the sentence which speaks of men being in bondage by yielding themselves servants to obey sin unto death. From this bondage he teaches that Christ has freed them. And so he exhorts his disciples to 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.'

I. There are two states very different in themselves, but neither of which can aptly be described as perfect freedom. The one, in which the will cannot assert itself if it would; the other, in which it can only succeed by an effort, and in which external circumstances do much towards guiding it to the conclusion at which it seems to arrive. The first is our condition by nature, for, being born in sin, we are unable by our own unaided efforts to do that which is right and well-pleasing to God. We need that good thing, which, by nature, we cannot have, to enable us to conquer the temptation of the world, the flesh, and the devil in such wise as God would have us to do. Our baptism frees us from the state of bondage in which we are held; it enables us to choose the good and avoid the evil; it restores to us the freedom of which we are deprived through the transgression of our first parents; but it does not free us from the

solicitations to sin in our members, from delighting in many things opposed to God's law, from all inclination to gratify ourselves in ways inconsistent with holiness of life. In other words, it does not take from us those evil tendencies implanted in our nature by the Fall, which sufficed to overpower the nobler faculties, the promptings to good which were born with us; but it imparts to us a new power, a principle from on high, with which, if our better promptings co-operate, we may overcome our lawless passions and appetites. But without our co-operation such divine gift will profit us nothing—nay, rather it will increase our guilt, because it will make us more willing instruments in the transgressions to which we are tempted.

II. As we shall be judged at last by this law of liberty, it would be well for us all to test ourselves by it now in this our day of probation. It is a hard matter to root out of our souls the love for earthly things, the things which minister to our pleasure, and happiness, and wellbeing in this life. In the parable of the sower, our Lord speaks of the seed which was sown amongst thorns, which represents 'the cares and riches and pleasures of this life,' and, consequently, bringing no fruit to perfection. He does not say that the seed of life so circumstanced will bring forth no fruit at all, but that it will bring no fruit to perfection. And so the misfortune is that many feel that they are bringing forth some fruit, but they do not test its quality, they do not consider whether it will be worth gathering into the eternal garner, whether it will be owned of God at last or be cast into the fire and burned. From want of reflection, of consideration, of self-examination, of fairly and honestly looking at the motives by which they are influenced, they keep themselves in ignorance of their own true state. They are too much absorbed by anxieties concerning those things from which they must part at death to attend to the only important and abiding reality. It will be a surprise to themselves at last when the force of external influences is removed from them, and they see themselves as they really are; it may be that they flatter themselves all their lives through that that sense of duty which prompted them to attend church, and to do some good works, was the governing principle of their life, when it was only an occasional visitor whose voice they had been taught to hear when they were children, but to which they could only occasionally listen amidst the pressure of sounds which interested them more in the busy progress of their lives.

How, then, are we to act that when we come to be judged by the law of liberty we may be able to bear the trial with joy, and not with grief? S. James tells us in our text, 'So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.' We must have regard to both words and actions; for both are the expression of

what we really are. It is out of the fulness of the heart that the mouth speaketh. It reveals the current of our thoughts, it manifests what really interests us, it tells the direction in which our real self is moving; and what our tongue thus manifests our actions emphasise. Both with tongue and actions we may play a part for a time, but in spite of ourselves in time we show our true selves; by speaking and acting in a particular way, sedulously and consistently for a long time, we mould ourselves into becoming what we profess to be. And it is to this that the Apostle would incite us. Let us so speak and so do as Christ has bidden us speak and do in His gospel. Let us place it before us as the one great end and aim of our life to do His will, to give effect to the promptings of His grace, to live for the next world and not for this, to copy the life of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. By His help this can be done; by depending upon Him this can be accomplished, but in no other way. People sometimes say, 'How can we love that which we have no inclination to love? How can we change our feelings towards persons or things where by nature we have no inclination to do as you advise?' S. James's advice answers this, 'So speak, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty'—constrain yourselves now to speak and act as if you loved Christ, and you will learn to love Him; constrain yourselves now to root out all the thorns and thistles which interfere with your love of Him, and then it will be your joy and delight to do His will; train yourself to realise the love He has shown to you, and to seek to show a like love to others for His sake, and His love will find a home in your hearts And in all things remember, that as in the last great day of account you will be judged by the law of liberty, you must prepare for that day by endeavouring that in all things Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.

DEAN GREGORY.

The Unconscious Agnosticism of Christians.

Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. S. JOHN xiv. 1.

THE drama of Easter, with its emphatic witness to the working of God's present power here on earth, naturally startles us as its light breaks in with sudden vehemence upon our shadowed paths and dusky habits. And that bewilderment, that recoil, that we feel

at first meeting it, we lay to the account of the event which so startles us. We charge it naturally enough upon the Resurrection which that creed so loudly proclaims. And yet the true secret of the recoil lies further back. The recoil is a revelation to us of the nature of that life that we had been quietly leading before we faced abruptly the fact of the Resurrection. This Easter sun throws its strong light back upon the road by which we had been travelling toward it through the night, and the voice that speaks to us through our risen Saviour seems to say, Look back! Look where you stand! Look at the path that your feet have been unwittingly treading! You start at my loud cry to you; yes, but it is well for you to start. You were stepping down and down to the lower and lower levels, you were nearing the dangerous swamps where there would be no more footing at all, and yet you never noticed it, you never took alarm. You were stupid with slow and creeping sleep; you were losing all sensitive response to the touch of higher things, and it is well for you, therefore, to start from your slumber, for this start is the measure of the distance to which you have slipped from the right way. If you had been stepping along the road where I bade you walk, you would have moved out into the glory of this Easter dawn without a quiver of recoil, without any touch of disturbance. All would have been to you as simple, as natural, as inevitable as it was to her who found one standing there in the stillness of the morning, close at her side, at whose felt presence all wonder and all bewilderment, and all disturbance yielded and ceased, as the quiet familiar voice called her by her name, and she turned and said, 'Rabboni.'

There is a path prepared for us all by God by which to arrive at the Resurrection without shock or jar, and it is the path of belief in God Himself. And that path God Himself has laboured to set in order, to direct, and fit, and smooth, and ever His voice has been behind us saying, 'This is the path, walk ye in it. This is the way along which My Christ is to come, on which He will be met and welcomed.' Every obstacle has been cleared which choked and obscured that path, every fence and hedge that could guard it has been built. God Himself has been busy century after century in making that path ready, so that His Son, when He came, and when He rose, should find His own with ease and with security, and should be found of them, walking along that prepared path. You and I may greet the great news of the Resurrection with the same simplicity with which we are told, 'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.' Simple, smooth, clear, instantaneous, the transition might effect itself, and, believing in God, it would inevitably follow that we should believe also in Jesus Christ.

The recoil, then, is a signal to us that we are off the path. It bids

us review and reconsider our normal ways. How have we got on to the track that does not lead to the Resurrection? The Resurrection, according to S. Paul, according to the Bible, is an event long anticipated, long prepared for, an event which might enter as the absolute turn and culmination of all natural endeavour and experience. Why does it not do so for us? Easter throws us back on that question, 'What is the world in which I habitually live? Is it a world which admits of Easter at all? Is it a world, a life, which, if Easter were true, would need it; or is it such, are its motives, and motions, and hopes, and expectations, such that Easter is simply not wanted?' And, I cannot but think that any man, or woman, who lives at all in the thick of modern thought and feeling, must know well enough how deep and how stern such a question as that becomes.

I. This world, into which Easter can enter, must be a world already open to God, a world in which it will be no surprise that God should be found working and moving. And yet every one of us knows the enormous weight of the forces which are working upon us, now and at every hour, to make our public and common lives practically and insensibly godless.

Science is the dominant, the existing, power of to-day. It draws us all within the net of its fascinations. It is always astonishing us with something strange and novel.

We never take up a book or a newspaper without yielding ourselves to its spell, it is on us like the pressure of the atmosphere, it is inbred in all of us as a instinctive mental habit, and therefore it is that we habitually live in a world from out of which God, and the things of God, have insensibly been omitted. We have become Agnostics without knowing it, and it is just with us, with you and with me, that this omission of God becomes so spiritually disastrous. Within the strict limits of scientific thinking and methods the omission is perfectly legitimate, perfectly expedient; it is done for a distinct purpose, and the purpose demands it. But you and I, so far as we fall under this scientific habit, carry out this omission of God outside the realm of science: we do it in our practical and moral handling of this living world of men; we do it in our active concerns with the living men about us. We slip into this scientific way of talking of them and discussing them and their affairs, in calculating possibilities, in considering political and social problems. We are always treating men as if they were the creatures of general laws, of mechanical motives, and could be summed up in statistics, and were a prey and the puppets of environing conditions. All this may be to a certain degree, but only to a certain degree: they are also much more than this. They are individual personal beings with living

moral characters, with created wills, and, so far as they are this, they are not to be accounted for by statistics; they are not subject to mechanical necessities, they are not the creatures of circumstances; but yet we go on placidly ignoring the difficulty, we make our calculations just as if it did not exist, and when some vigorous and violent exercise of this vital personal power in man upsets all our statistical reckonings in some moral reaction or spiritual revolution, we are startled, we recoil. We had not allowed for this, we greet it with something of that bewildered surprise with which we treat it as incredible that God should raise the dead.

II. Why is our mode so changed, and prayer and its possibilities banished wholly out of the scene? That is the question, and I cannot but think that it is this practical godlessness, and all the generalisations under which we review public life, which is the reason. Though, for our own part, we believe in God, we dare not transplant, enlarge, our inner belief, so as to cover the wide world outside. Why nurse it to ourselves? Why let it be driven back and terrified by the scientific habits of mind which have laid their hands upon that out-of-door life there in the world outside? We and others have got used to formulæ which omit God, soul, and spirit from all accounts, and we are ashamed to use any other formulæ but those that are popular and common, and familiar. Those formulæ we should throw off in a minute, if they attempted to dictate to our own inner habits of life; we should repudiate them with a hearty laugh at their absurdity, if they attempted to order us about, but we have not the spiritual courage to assert to the world outside that which we know to be real and true within; we shrink from interpreting other men's lives according to the measure of our own spiritual experiences. And, if we do this in the simplest matter of spirit—that of prayer—if we practically drop out of our review the very ground-work, the very possibility of all activity of God amid the real affairs of men, then how can we wonder if we recoil from the highest witness of that energetic activity—the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?

III. Believe in God—that is our Lord's first precept—if we would believe in Him. All faith must base itself on this fundamental factor: Believe in the Father, believe in God. Start there, that is the only way; believe in God, not only in the hidden recesses of your own secret spirit, but in your practical everyday working life in the world; see this world with the eyes of men who believe that God is in it, that God is to be seen and heard there; spread out this timid, shrinking, nervous faith that lurks there in your secret souls cringing in the shadow; carry out in the interpretation of life that which is your own conviction. If you believe in God in yourselves, believe in Him in others; believe that what He proves Himself to be to you,

that He is in all. Believe in God when you look out in life. So different, so much harder it is, this belief, from that of our private affairs. We may try it sometimes, we may exercise ourselves in it in this way. We who pray and pray earnestly, with real assurance, may nevertheless try what we feel if we turn our eyes to watch another man at his prayers as he kneels there in the church, if we quietly think it over in cold blood as a spectator, and say, 'Look there, that man there is speaking into the ears of the living God; those lips of his that I can see moving are actually conveying to a present God what it is he desires. God is there with him then in that place, and is moved by what He hears, and is acting back again in answer. God and the soul, look at them there, actually communing together before my eyes.' If we remember that, how we recoil, how we start! Our usual apparatus for taking in the visible world has not allowed for this. It seems a dream and a fancy in other men, and yet it is no dream, no fancy at all when we do it ourselves: it is natural, secure and reliable. Let us believe that first in our own experience, let us know it, try it, and hold by it, and live in it, and then, if we do believe it, if we do know it with all the intense conviction of a life-long piety, then believe it wholly, believe it everywhere, give it objective reality, throw yourself out in it in your estimation of life in this great round earth, believe that the Father is there, that this world is full of His energy, His breath, appealing to this under-world of living Spirit: then you will have got to the roots of that faith which, by believing in God, cannot but go on to believe in Jesus Christ, whom He raised from the dead.

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

Elijah's Intercession.

(*For a Rogation Day*)

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. S. JAMES v. 16-18.

IT seems from what S. James says just before and after these words, that what he is specially thinking of in them, the special respect in which he wishes to insist on the power of prayer, is its power to obtain the forgiveness of a brother's sins. But there is nothing to hinder our applying his words to the case of prayers dealing with the same matter as those of Elijah which he refers to: prayers such as we are bidden to make at this season, for God giving us such rain and sunshine from the sky, and such plenty and fruitfulness in the ground,

as will suffice us to live through this year, and the winter that is to follow it, in comfort and happiness and thankfulness to Him. The story of Elijah is quoted as a proof that the power of prayer does prevail in such things as these. It is the prayer, no doubt, of a righteous man that avails so much; none but a saint and prophet like Elijah can expect his prayer to have such an absolutely miraculous effect. But still he differed from us in a degree only of power, not in its kind. He was a man subject to like feelings and infirmities with ourselves, and though holier than we, and so able to do greater things, yet we can do things enough for our need if we have holiness enough for our own salvation. We may learn from the example of his history to know that our prayers on this behalf will not be in vain.

I. It is not necessary to say much of the first part of Elijah's prayer. We are not told in the Book of Kings that the judgment which he denounced against Ahab was sent by his prayer, as we are told that the deliverance from the judgment was, though we can readily believe it when S. James tells us so. At any rate, in this part of his work Elijah is no model for us, as with his calling down fire from heaven. The faith of Christians must work in a different way from his faith, because they are of another manner of spirit. Where Elijah prayed earnestly that it might not rain, because of the people's sins, Christians in their prayers are rather to imitate the general providence of God, whereby He sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust. Nevertheless it is a real lesson for us to remember what Elijah did—to know how the saints unite themselves in God's wrath against sin, though He showed that wrath in a way we may not now.

It is set forth in the Book of Revelation as an image of the wrath of God, that His two witnesses shall have power to shut the heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy—and that, as it seems, for the same time as Elijah did; and it is generally thought that these two witnesses are Elijah and Enoch himself, who are to return to earth in the last days, and carry on their old message of God's wrath against the ungodly, until in the time of Antichrist they are put to death for the testimony of Jesus, as it is appointed for all men once to die, while they have never died yet.

II. But the other part of Elijah's prayer, the prayer for the removal of the drought and famine, is a prayer of exactly the same kind that ours ought to be. We pray God to give us this summer such seasonable weather as shall be wholesome for man and beast and shall bring plenty out of the earth; and we ought to pray for this with the same earnestness as Elijah did, and the same confidence in the effect of our prayers. Read the story of the way in which Elijah prayed before the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her

fruit: 'Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing; and he said, Go again seven times; and it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth out of the sea a little cloud like a man's hand; and he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.' He knew that God, after His victory over the hearts of the people which He had turned back again, after His vengeance on the false prophets who had led them astray, now purposed to have mercy on those whom He had chastised; and, knowing God's purpose of mercy, he set himself steadily to accomplish it by prayer, prayer faithful, earnest and strong, with the whole strength of his mighty spirit. He would pray until the rain came, and knew that it would come if he prayed. Though there were no sign of its coming, though the heaven were as brass above him, and the earth as iron under him, he would persevere in his prayers, he would not doubt of the event. If there were nothing to be seen over the sea, he would go on till there was. Though the sun shone hotly without raising a mist from the waters, and though the wind tarried in the chambers of the west, and sent not a breath to cool the land of Israel, he would stay bowed down there until the heaven was black with clouds and with wind, and there was a very great rain. He would not stop his prayer for a moment, even to look out for its fulfilment; there he would kneel, bowed down upon the earth, his face hidden and the world forgotten, until he had prevailed and obtained what he sought. Then, the moment God's answer came—the moment He heard there was the cloud, though only like a man's hand, seen in the sky, then he immediately knew what was coming, and acted on his knowledge, as a man would on a certain sign known by natural experience. 'Get thee down, that the rain stop not,'—there is almost more striking faith in those simple words than we should see in the story of his earnest prayer if it were without them. The rain was coming: it would come quickly, come abundantly, as of course; God would not mock His servant with a delusive promise, or put him off with a half fulfilment, but when He began He would also make an end; and when once His purpose was declared it was a thing for man to reckon on and act on without delay.

III. This prayer is set before us as a model for our imitation, as example of what our prayer may do, if we will emulate the earnestness of Elijah's. Our prayer will have its effect as certainly as his, though the effect may be less wonderful. Without a direct revelation from God, such as was made to him, we cannot expect to know times and seasons as he did, and by one evening's labour to draw down the

showers of fruitfulness in the sight of all men; but we have a promise from God, less definite but not less sure, to encourage us in our prayers for blessing on the fruits of the earth, and to assure us that the prayer of faith has power with the God of Nature. He has promised to those who trust in Him, who seek His kingdom before all things, to give them all that is necessary for their bodily sustenance: not to give them always wealth or plenty, but to ensure them against want; that He who made the body and inspired it with life, will supply to it such store of food and raiment as is needful to make life happy.

We do not say positively whether this year we shall have a healthy summer and a plentiful harvest, but if we pray in faith that God hears prayer, we do know positively that, in the course of God's good providence, our various necessities will be supplied from day to day, and from year to year, in such measure as He sees to be best for us. In every place it is a duty for men to seek God's blessing on the crops and fruitfulness of the earth; all men are, even for their own sake, concerned in these things, and dependent on them for their comfort. Here in the country, there is no danger of our forgetting our dependence on the fruits of the earth and the blessings of the seasons; the danger is rather of our forgetting that it is God's will and God's blessing by which these are sent to us. Seeing as familiar, daily, and yearly commonplace things the round of seed-time and harvest, of ploughing and reaping, we think of it as a matter of course that things should come to us as they do, without thinking who gives them. Seeing how much human skill and human industry have to do with the earth's increase, we almost think of plenty as a thing that men can win for themselves; or when we see, as we also do see, that human skill and industry fail, when other causes are wanting to aid their efforts, we think of these as a matter of chance, not to be reckoned on or altered, but only to be allowed for as totally uncertain. We forget that all that happens in the natural world, whether constant or variable, always the same or never twice alike, known and calculable by us or too complicated for human science—all is indeed certain, fixed and determined beforehand, but fixed and determined by no cause but one, the will and the foreknowledge of God; and that His will takes account of our prayers.

It would be a grand thought enough, a tremendous view of the power of prayer, if we believed that when a Christian prayed in Christ's name, in his church or in his chamber, when his prayer came up for a memorial before God, when Jesus presented it before the Father's throne, then the Lord Almighty spoke to an angel, and gave him a charge never given before, to fly swiftly down to earth and perform his fellow-servant's petition; that even now, when the

Christian Church is praying for a blessing on this year's harvest, one strong angel is turning back the breath of blighting winds, and another is storing up the rain-clouds, that they may fall in due measure and due season upon the fields, and leave the sky bright and the sun warm in between, and that each of these is sent to his work by a new decree of God, a word spoken for the first time when He hears the prayer that obtains it. But is it not a sublimer thought still that God has decreed to grant our prayers from the beginning of all things? that before the Lord God caused it to rain upon the earth or created a man to till the ground, before the mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground, before the waters were gathered together into one place and the dry land appeared, yea, before God created the heavens and the earth, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, before the world was, before the angels were, God foresaw our prayers, and God decreed to grant them? W. H. SIMCOX.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Solitude beneficial. S. John xvi. 30.

THEN are we most with God when we are without the company of man.

Solitude and Society. S. John xvi. 30.

IN solitude a man may go to heaven by the way of prayer and devotion; but in society he carries others with him by the way of mercy and charity. In solitude there are fewer temptations; but then there is likewise the exercise of fewer virtues. Solitude is a good school, and the world the best theatre. The institution is best there, the practice here. The wilderness hath the advantage of discipline; but society furnishes the opportunities of perfection (Josh. i. 9; S. Mark i. 3, v. 19, ix. 2).

Tribulation. S. John xvi. 33.

WERE we to judge from the conduct of many, we might conclude that it is an easy thing to be a Christian.

They seem to think that it is as easy to wash one's heart as one's hands; to change their habits as their dress; to admit the light of truth into their souls, as to open the shutters of a morning; or that conversion is as easy a matter as turning a ship round by the helm.

How else do we account for delay in the matter of salvation, or for a deathbed repentance?

It ought certainly to be an easy task that is delayed till we are unfit for anything else.

Easy to be a Christian! Did Abraham find it easy to obey God? 'Take now thy son Isaac, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest,

and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering on a mountain which I will tell thee of,'—was that easy for a father? was the Cross easy for Christ? Is it easy to mortify the flesh? to be crucified to the world? to resist the devil? to die daily unto sin? Is it easy to be Christlike? No, it is not easy. No one who knows anything about it would dare to say that it is an easy thing to be a Christian. It is not.

It is difficult. 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence'; and were it not that God promises to perfect His strength in our weakness, we should fail.

Tribulation. Rev. vii. 2-13.

What say you? would you not be afflicted? Whether would you rather mourn for a while, or for ever? One must be chosen; the election is easy. Whether would you rather rejoice for one fit, or always? You would do both. Pardon me, it is a fond covetousness, and idle singularity, to affect it. What! that you alone may fare better than all God's saints! that God should strew carpets for your nice feet only, to walk into your heaven; and make that way smooth for you, which all patriarchs, prophets, evangelists, confessors, Christ Himself, have found rugged and bloody! Away with this self-love, and come down, you ambitious sons of Zebedee, and, ere you think of sitting near the throne, be content to be called unto the Cross. Now is your trial. Let your Saviour see how much of His better portion you can pledge, then shall you see how much of His glory He can afford you. Be content to drink of His vinegar and gall; and you shall drink new wine with Him in His kingdom.

Liberty, Equality, and Brotherhood—the True and the False. S. James i. 15.

There are two freedoms, the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought.

Two equalities, the false, which reduces all intellects and all character to a dead level, and gives the same power to the bad as to the good, to the wise as to the foolish, ending thus in practice in the grossest inequality; the true, wherein each man has equal power to educate and use whatever faculties or talents God has given him, be they less or more. This is the divine equality which the Church proclaims, and nothing else proclaims as she does.

Two brotherhoods, the false, where a man chooses who shall be his brothers, and whom he will treat as such; the true, in which a man believes that all are his brothers, not by the will of the flesh, or the will of man, but by the will of God, whose children they all are alike. The Church has three special possessions and treasures, the Bible, which proclaims man's freedom; baptism, his equality; the Lord's Supper, his brotherhood.

Ascension Day

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	ACTS I. 1-11.
GOSPEL	S. MARK XVI. 14-20.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	DEUT. VII. 9-15.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	2 KINGS II. 1-16.
SECOND MORNING LESSON	S. LUKE XXIV. 44—END.
SECOND EVENING LESSON	HEB. IV.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Immortality of the Body.

Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? EPHESIANS iv. 9.

TO the point of His Resurrection, Christ's life, as far as is revealed to us, was all one long, continuous, steep descent.

To the Incarnation, to a low social grade, to a manger, to infancy, to obedience, to education, to service, to contempt, to desertion, to spiritual conflict, to horror, to scorn and agony, to the cross, to the grave, to hell!

Then came the ascent. To life, to a spiritual body, to liberty, to restored Omnipotence, to an immunity from all material laws, to the clouds, to heaven, to the throne of God! And the upward path is not finished even there. The conquest is not yet complete. The ascent goes on. 'For now we see not yet all things put under Him'; but 'He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.' And then the climax and the top, when, 'at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

But you will observe that there is an accurate and ordered pro-

portion between the descent and the ascent. 'He that descended,' 'into the lower parts of the earth,' His Deity to our world, His unsullied dignity to the meanest haunts of poverty and shame, His flesh to the tomb, His spirit to Hades—He that descended is the same also that ascended up above the sepulchre, above the powers of darkness, above the fury and malice of His enemies, above the earth, above the stars, above angels and principalities and powers, above every name that is named, above the utmost flight of our furthest imagination, far above all heavens.

The balance is perfect: 'He that ascended is the same,' in every point, 'as He that descended.'

It is always so. As is the descent, so also is the ascent. What is the secret of all the high leaps of life? To spring from a very low stoop. Who are the really great ones? Those who feel themselves the least. Who make the highest attainments in the spiritual life? They who most lay themselves as sinners in the dust. Who occupy the loftiest places? They who bend to do the most menial acts. Show me the chiefest saint in heaven, and, by the same token, I will show you the lowliest penitent on this earth. The way downward—to the very bottom—is always the road up to the top. For the two facts are one: 'He that ascended is the same also that descended first.'

Ascension Day is especially a festival of the immortality of the body. More than immortality, for what dies, and comes to life again, is greater than if it never died; and that which, when it comes to life again, takes a life much better than the life that dies, and carries that life far onward into a higher state—that is something more than re-living; and that is exactly what Christ's Body did, and exactly what our bodies will do.

Christ's Body died. That Body resumed life. The resumed life was better than the life laid down. And the better life was stamped with glory, and became heavenly and everlasting.

And can that be called death? Does the body die? Does not death turn to decay? Is not that literally true of every dead body—it sleeps, sleeps till the morning? 'He that liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die.'

Then, in what is the body inferior to the soul? Or how is the life of the body less eternal and less indestructible than the life of the soul?

Jesus's spirit had been in heaven—or, more strictly, in Paradise—before the Ascension, during the three days. But now, for the first time, His Body went there. Save the two translated ones in the Old Testament—who are altogether exceptional, and about whose state we know very little—Christ's Body was the first body that was

ever seen in heaven. He Himself had no Body when He left heaven. His Body was the first body 'within the veil': 'the first-begotten from the dead'; 'the first-born of every creature.'

Look at that Ascending Body. See how it pioneers the way, now it leads the van of the great army of the saints, how it wings its course, and cleaves the sky! What a flight of beautiful and glorified forms will one day follow it!

And this ascension of the body is the characteristic of the Christian religion. Numbers of creeds have believed in 'the immortality of the soul,' but only the Christian religion has taught and made provision for 'the immortality of the body.'

The Jews had glimpses of it; but they were only the refractions of Christ.

Christ's Body was first natural, then spiritual, then glorified. Natural, from Bethlehem to Calvary, only and perfectly natural, subject to all our laws. Spiritual, for forty days, from the grave to the Ascension, no longer subject to material laws. But then and for ever glorified. He has been seen in His glorified Body by S. Stephen, and S. Paul, and S. John.

But we have no faculties yet to conceive of a glorified body. But it was as a spiritual body that He rose, not glorified, as a spiritual body.

It was before He took His glory. He went up just as He was walking, or as He stood, with His disciples. Do not think of His ascending Body as yet glorious. Neither the action of the disciples, nor the language of the angels, leads us to that conclusion. He ascended spiritual. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And to a spiritual body it is as easy and as much a necessity to go up as it is to a natural body to go down. He ascended by virtue of the soaring impulse there is in everything that is more ethereal than the things around it. He was assimilated to that higher, purer atmosphere. His proper and natural element was heaven. And so to heaven He went.

And such, in a sense and degree, must it be with us. We are all first natural, then spiritual, then glorious.

At the first, your whole nature was all gross. It gravitated to the earth. Its essence was to descend. When the Holy Spirit began to mingle with your being, it affected your very body. The great difficulty every Christian has is, 'O that I could make my body spiritual! that I could purify and etherealise what is so low and heavy!' And, to a certain extent, your body became spiritual. It was under control. Its desires were less carnal; its tastes loftier. It had drawings and tendencies upwards. It was not like Christ's spiritual, or even Christ's natural body, for it was still 'of the earth,

earthy,' dull, grovelling, sinful. Only, comparatively, with its first condition, it showed signs of spirituality. There were germs of the spiritualised in your body.

It must be so. We do not pass abruptly from the natural to the glorified. There must be spiritualising processes between. What would be the condition of a body in the future which had undergone no influences between? What would be the resurrection of that body?

I know that, after all, 'it is sown a natural body, and raised a spiritual body.' Yet, to the last moment, and in the very best, the natural preponderates. But the natural body has longings after the spiritual. Its grief is that it is so natural. It struggles with the spiritual. It knows the joy of the thought, 'I shall be spiritual.' Therefore, at an infinite distance, and in a very inferior signification, yet truly, we must all go through Christ's gradations, natural, spiritual, glorified. The triple life of every Christian man lies in the allegory.

The Ascension of our Lord perfectly identifies the earthly and the heavenly body. No evidence could have made it clearer. The Body of Christ was visibly unchanged to the last verge of sight; and beyond it, the angels expressly declared it would go on till it should come back again just as it went.

As respects ourselves, it is a very practical thought; as respects those we love, it is a very comforting one. It is a subject I cannot pursue far. We know little more than the fact of the identity. How it may be in the intermediate state—till the Advent, while the spirit lives without its body, how spirit can be identified, how spirit can discover spirit, how spirits can communicate, how spirit may be known at all—we can only conjecture. It is quite possible that though we cannot see spirits, a disembodied spirit may. It is quite possible that each spirit may have a certain distinctive shape and character. It is quite possible therefore that there may be entire communication with spirit and spirit in the waiting-time before the resurrection.

I cannot believe for a moment that we are to wait for our bodies before we can enjoy one another's society in another world. David and his child, Lazarus and Dives, Christ and the thief, were evidently in instant communication.

But it answers sweetly to the anticipation and joy of heaven to learn that there we shall recognise again—in all their loved and familiar individuality—the face, the expression, the form, the motion, the eye, the feature, the smile, the heart and the soul eloquent in the countenance, of what was once so dear to presence and is now so fond to memory!

It will be all there, restored in its finest touches, and in all its delicacies, only with a glow of light and Jesus on it, which will add an untold charm, and a brilliancy unguessed before.

It will be the same mother, the same father, the same child, the same brother, the same sister, the same husband, the same wife, the same dear one, just as they went.

And this is a pleasant thought, we shall all ascend together. We enter Paradise at different times, as God is pleased to appoint for us. But we shall all be 'clothed again' in our beautiful bodies, and go into heaven at once, for 'neither shall we which are alive prevent them which are asleep, nor will they prevent us'; but we shall rise, and we shall mount, and we shall be perfected together. Side by side, hand in hand, we shall leave this earth, and go up and pass through the gates of glory.

And, oh! how at that moment will the Ascension repay those 'descents to the lowest parts of the earth'—the cross, the tarrying, and the grave!

Meanwhile, remember the future of your own body. Now, that body is little else than an enemy, in constant antagonism with your soul. Sometimes an incentive to selfishness, to sloth, to wrong indulgence, to passions, to sin. Sometimes a nervous thing, that depresses you without cause. Sometimes a weakness, a sore hindrance in the path of duty. Sometimes a false and feverish excitement. Sometimes a very drag upon your spirit, forcing you to the ground, and fastening you into the dust!

And it is difficult to think of that body—as it is made to be, and as it will be, a very help to rise, and the instrument of holy exercises—a fitting mate for a pure and ardent soul, equally with it the image of Jesus!

There is a danger of thinking too little of the body. Never look at your own body without remembering its high destiny. In that very body you are to ascend, and to stand in the presence of God.

Take care of it. Be chaste with it. Train it. Reverence it.

It is true 'it came,' as David tells us, 'from the lower parts of the earth'; but it shall ascend to the highest heaven.

It is a body of death now, but one day it shall be a body of life, and love, and power, and loveliness!

JAMES VAUGHAN.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Ascension and the Second Advent.

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. Acts i. 10, 11.

T must at least confirm our faith in those angelic manifestations which are narrated in the New Testament to observe how profound is the significance on each occasion of the utterances of the heavenly messengers. The name Jesus, with the assurance that 'He shall save His people from their sins,' has, from the moment it was uttered till the present day, embodied the sum and substance of the gospel. The song of the multitude of the heavenly host near Bethlehem, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men,' has been similarly felt at all times to express the essential glory of the Christian dispensation. The clear and calm gaze of heaven seems to penetrate to the heart of the great mystery it contemplates, and the central truth is presented to our meditation in one pregnant phrase. The same characteristic marks the utterance of the angels to the Apostles on that solemn occasion which we commemorate this week. There is something intensely natural and vivid in the description of the Apostles looking steadfastly towards heaven as He went up, all their hearts and their minds yearning after their Lord, lately restored to them from the grave, with whom they had lived in sacred communion for forty days, and now suddenly vanishing from them into the mysterious depth of heaven. At that moment angelic voices recall them to earth and to the realities around them, and tell them what is the chief significance, for the practical purposes of life, of the event they were witnessing. That which it was of supreme importance for them to realise and keep in mind was, that the Lord who had thus left them would return, the same in nature, in character, and in power. 'This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' All their life was to be controlled by this belief; their thoughts were ever to look forward to that great day. He had ascended into heaven and had assumed His seat of power and judgment at the right hand of the Father, and He would hereafter return to execute that judgment visibly in human form, and with the human as well as

divine authority with which they were familiar. Thus, at the very moment of the Ascension, the thoughts of the disciples were directed by heavenly guidance to the future return of our Lord to establish His kingdom finally, and to execute judgment; and in accordance with this direction, the Creed of the Church has ever combined the two truths in intimate connection. 'He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty: from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.'

That the last angelic words uttered respecting our Lord's work and office, at the moment of His departure, should thus point us forward to His future return to judge the world, is a fact of deep and manifold significance; and it merits our attention the more at the present day by reason of the vivid light it casts upon some of the most conspicuous of our perplexities and controversies. For its due appreciation, it is important to bear in mind how exactly this final angelic message corresponds to the whole tenor of our Lord's ministry and teaching. We are told that His preaching was from the first summed up in the message, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'; and, although that proclamation has a double aspect—of salvation no less than of judgment—the aspect of judgment would seem to be the primary one. Such, certainly, was its meaning in the mouth of John the Baptist. He explained his proclamation to mean that One was coming after him whose fan was in His hand, who would thoroughly purge His floor, and gather up His wheat into the garner, but who would burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. That this meaning, indeed, was prominent in our Lord's proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven is forcibly illustrated by the Sermon on the Mount. To regard that sermon as simply a collection of maxims of morality is to miss its most distinctive characteristic; that characteristic which aroused the astonishment of those to whom it was spoken, its tone of authority. It not only proclaims moral duties, but it proclaims the sanction for them. It speaks throughout of men being brought under the operation of the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven; laws more severe than any of which they had hitherto been conscious, and of all their actions being done under the eye of a Father in heaven, who will reward or punish them in accordance with their most secret conduct. More particularly, it concludes by a clear declaration that an appointed day will come when this judgment will be executed, and that our Lord Himself will preside over its execution. 'Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? and then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.' 'Therefore,' He adds, 'whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will

liken him unto a wise man'; and 'every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man.'

I. Our Lord's assertions of His power and right to judge all mankind, and of His future coming for that purpose, are common to all the Evangelists, and are at least as strong in the three first as in S. John. The latter Evangelist, indeed, records some sayings which throw a light upon the relations in which our Lord stands to God the Father, in His office as Judge. 'The Father,' we are told, 'judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; for as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself, and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.' The power of judging all men must lie in the hands of God alone, and any person who exercises that power must be endued with the omnipotence and omniscience of God Himself. S. John thus reveals the necessary condidition in our Lord's relation to the Father for His exercising the office of Judge. But the declaration that He will exercise that office, and will exercise it with the whole authority and power of the Godhead, is made or implied at every turn of His teaching, and cannot be eliminated from any of the Gospels without such an entire annihilation of their historical character as would prevent our placing any reliance on their account of our Lord's words.

To take but one instance, consider what a tremendous claim is involved in the familiar parable of the division between the sheep and the goats. There are some persons who would use that parable, like many other portions of the Gospels, as though it was simply a touching and forcible exhortation to beneficence. But it must be apparent upon reflection how much more is involved in it. The blessing and the curse in that last awful scene are bestowed, not simply upon works of benevolence or unkindness as such, but upon works of benevolence or unkindness considered as in effect done to our Lord Himself. The parable depicts all mankind as standing in a vital relation to Christ, and as blessed or cursed according as they have served either Him or those whom He adopts as His own. Recall the final sentence of the scene, 'Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me; and these shall go away into everlasting punishment.' Had the speaker been only one of the sons of men, what a tremendous presumption would have been involved in such a juxtaposition of words! 'Ye did it not to Me; and these shall go away into everlasting punishment.' The whole fate of mankind depending on their relation to Him! To be the Judge of every

human soul, the supreme arbiter of every act and thought and word, this is the character in which our Lord presents Himself to us throughout the Gospels, in His simplest utterances as well as in His most mysterious; and in this claim alone He reveals Himself to us as our Lord and our God.

This is, in fact, one of the first great practical realities which are at stake in that long battle which has raged around the Church, and sometimes within it, from the earliest times to the present hour, respecting the nature of our Lord. We may sometimes hear that question discussed as if it were to a large extent a speculative one. That is the manner in which it was represented by Arian writers in the time of S. Athanasius; and the first ages of the Church, and the very lifetime of the Apostles, were at least as rife as the present day with attempts to create some other image of our Lord than that which is furnished by the records of His miraculous birth in S. Matthew and S. Luke, of His eternal Godhead in S. John, and of His Ascension to sit on the right hand of the Father in the Acts of the Apostles. If He were only a teacher, such attempts might not vitally conflict with His authority. But He claims to be much more than a teacher. In the very first place He claims to be a judge; and thus a debate respecting His nature involves a debate respecting His jurisdiction. He asserts a prerogative and power to which it would be blasphemy, as the High Priest declared, for a mere man to aspire, and He has indissolubly united this claim with His whole moral and spiritual teaching. That is the character in which at the very outset, as at the end of His ministry, He came before the Jews; that is the character in which His angels revealed Him as He departed from earth; that is the character in which He comes before us now. It must, moreover, be observed that the acknowledgment or rejection of Him in that character is declared by Him to be a point on which His judgment at the last day will be pronounced with special solemnity. It was in connection with His claim to be the Christ of God, divine amidst all His humiliation, that He uttered the solemn warning, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.'

II. The fact that the judgment of our Lord gives supreme importance to the moral and spiritual character of our actions, is so far from placing it out of harmony with the business of life that this is the only condition on which it could co-operate with all the work of life without exception. The one quality which is supreme over all work, of whatever kind, is the moral quality. All other things must needs vary indefinitely. The physical and intellectual powers present an endless diversity both in degree and in kind. But truth in work,

and faithfulness to the domestic or social relations in which we are placed—these conditions are the same in every occupation, and in proportion as they are fulfilled, is the utmost amount of intellectual or physical power developed, and does work of all kinds prosper. The moral duties, for our discharge of which we shall all be judged, are the hinge on which the whole world turns. Let those be duly performed, and everything else will follow, in accordance with the various laws which God has impressed upon our nature. We have but to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto us. The whole of life, therefore, without any exception, was illuminated and revivified by this revelation of our Lord being the Judge of quick and dead.

In proportion as we grasp the same principle, and make it the starting-point of all our thought, shall we be sensible of a similar illumination and a similar vigour. There is one moral and religious question which must take precedence of all others, and that is the old one, 'What think ye of Christ?' Do you accept His claim to be the Judge of quick and dead, and the Lord of life alike in this world and in the next? He comes forward with that claim, and there is no other claim in competition with it. If a man unhappily reject it, he can only fall back on the comparatively dim light of nature and of conscience, and feel his way in the twilight as best he may. But it is a claim which may be said to be in possession of the ground. It has guided the civilisation which is now the hope of the world during the last eighteen centuries, and there is an enormous presumption in its favour. But if it be accepted, it decides at one trenchant stroke many of the controversies by which the world is distracted; it sets aside many a futile debate; and affords a firm basis for the edifice of moral and social life.

III. But to turn for a moment from this more general view of the principle in question to its relation to our private lives, we must acknowledge at once how profound and how elevating would be its influence if it were always present to our minds in full force. To believe that everything we do, or say, or think, is under the eye of the Lord Jesus Christ, and will hereafter be revealed at His tribunal, and judged by Him—this would seem without controversy, the mightiest moral influence that can be brought to bear upon a man. It was said of late, by a distinguished writer who was not a Christian, that our Lord's character was so perfect that a man could hardly adopt a better rule for his guidance than that of acting in such a manner that Christ, if He saw his actions, would approve them. But what is this to the positive belief that Christ does see them, and will either approve or condemn them in proportion as they are in accordance with His will? There was always something

vague and uncertain, both among Jews and heathen, in the belief of a future judgment. It was something too vast, too intangible, too much beyond our standard and measure, to be realised, and to produce its due influence upon the mind. But a judgment by the Man Christ Jesus, whose words we read in the Gospels, whose voice penetrates into our hearts, who is portrayed so vividly that we can almost see and hear Him—to believe that this same Jesus will so return in like manner as He was seen to go into heaven—to be brought into His presence, to feel His eye and His judgment upon us, and to await His censure or His approval—this is a prospect which we can realise only too keenly, and which is fitted to touch the very depths of our souls. Indeed, the thought of that penetrating judgment would be unsupportable unless it were accompanied by the assurance that this Judge is also our Saviour, alike now and hereafter. We may be assured that He will display towards us the mercy as well as the severity which marked His words and acts when He was upon earth, and we cannot doubt the love and tenderness of One who laid down His life for us. The blessing, accordingly, of the revelation is as great for the present as for the future. Were we left alone, even with the guidance which the Gospels and the Epistles afford us, to work out our own salvation, to train and discipline ourselves in harmony with the Saviour's holy will, we should be appalled at the consciousness of our weakness and our ignorance. But the Lord, who requires us to grow like Him, and who has established His will as the final standard of our lives, is ever present with us, to guide us by His Spirit into all truth, alike of thought and of action. If we trust Him, and strive continually to obey Him, His final judgment will prove but the last act of the gracious discipline by which He has all our lives been bringing us into ever-increasing harmony with Himself. He does not ask us, with all our sins and imperfections, to bring ourselves into harmony with Him. He asks us only to submit ourselves to Him in trust, in prayer, and in faithful study of His word, and He Himself will bring us into that harmony. Our whole thoughts in meditating on this subject may be thus summed up in the prayer of the *Te Deum*: 'Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father. We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge; we therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.'

HENRY WACE.

ASCENSION DAY

The Message of Ascensiontide.

But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Acts i. 8.

I. NO doubt the first and most obvious thought suggested to our minds by the Ascension of our Lord is that of His completed earthly ministry, and of His return to glory. As 'we stand gazing up into heaven,' while Jesus leaves the world which He had loved so well, we try to think of that wondrous triumph which awaited Him, the welcome of the heavenly host to their returning Lord, until we can almost fancy that we hear the rich burst of the angelic anthem, as He sits down in glory upon the throne of heaven. And it is well for us to worship thus in lowly adoration before the majesty of the crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Well that we too should lift up our hearts unto the Lord, and crown Him Lord of all.

For it is only those who are enabled by the power of a steadfast faith to fix their gaze on the ascended Lord, and to seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; it is only they upon whose whole life there is reflected the light which comes from the glory of Jesus' work and Jesus' triumph; it is only these who are able to take up the grand commission which our Master gives, and go out into the world even to the uttermost parts of the earth to be 'witnesses unto Him.' The Apostles, as we know, went back from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, there to wait with one accord in prayer and supplication, until the promise of the Father came, until they should be endued with the power of the Holy Ghost, and then go out, quickened by a divine life, braced up and strengthened by a divine energy, to proclaim the blessed tidings of His love to man and fulfil their ministry for Him.

The return of Jesus was the object of their hopes and their desires, but they had learned that the prospect of His coming was to them a call to self-denial and to service that they might prepare the world for Him; and the very condition of the world around them, dark, blinded, and ignorant, made this call to work more clear and more emphatic.

II. So, too, in these days the message of the Ascension is the same; for still our crowned Saviour waits expectant on the throne of glory until His work in this world be done. Are we waiting, expecting, longing, hastening on the coming of the day of God? Then to us, to you and to me, He speaks again to tells us, that we too, in our day and generation, are to serve Him and His Kingdom;

we too are to go out, not counting the cost too great, not shrinking from the sacrifice, not reckoning any service too hard, if it helps us to glorify Him with our bodies and spirits which are His. And this call of Jesus we too may hear more clear and more emphatic as we look out into the world and listen to the ever-pressing cry of human misery and human suffering and human sin. For wherever in the world the sin is the blackest, and wherever the ignorance is the most profound, there is the voice of need most urgent, as it pleads with God's people to show forth the pitying love of Christ Himself, that they may be 'witnesses unto Him.'

Wounded, bleeding, nigh to death, bloodstained, polluted, and defiled, the form of our very humanity lies before us, hopeless, helpless in the dust. Are not Christ's servants to be the very first to stretch out the hand to help? Is there any nobler, any holier way in which you can be a witness to the world of the Christ whom you worship and adore?

The fundamental axiom in all work for God is that no one is beyond the power of Christ's love to reach and Christ's sacrifice to redeem. Were they the righteous or the sinners whom Jesus came to save? I have often heard it asked triumphantly, Is not this miserable condition of the masses of the poor mainly their own fault? Is not their wretchedness due to drunkenness and improvidence and immorality? I cannot admit that this is a true statement of the case. If people are forced to live in circumstances in which religion and virtue are almost impossible; if they are allowed to grow up under such conditions and influences as barely to give room for even a desire for improvement; if out of this very misery and wretchedness they are carried into sin, is it fair to turn round upon them and proclaim that their wretchedness is the result of their sin? Had we been in their circumstances, had we their temptations could we hope to have stood firm? But even if it were so, let the worst be granted, is this the reason why Christian efforts should be relaxed? The more wretched and hopeless, the more wicked, and sinful, and abandoned, the more need for that whole-hearted sympathy of which our Blessed Lord is the highest example, who 'came to seek and to save that which was lost.' Surely where the darkness is the greatest, there is the sorest need of Christian light and influence. In God's name I enter a protest against the dangerous, the immoral, the un-Christianlike argument which we so often hear; as if we were to leave the abandoned and the vicious, because they are altogether beyond the reach of human sympathy, beyond the power of Christ's love to save. How far will you extend this vicious argument? If a fellow-creature is in peril of his life, will you stay to ask whether his folly led him into danger before you can determine whether your

own selfishness will permit you to make an effort for his safety? If a man is dying with disease, will you dare to say that because his own wickedness brought upon him his malady, therefore he must be left to die, without a human hand stretched out to aid? Is this Christ-like, is it even man-like? The common feelings of humanity, the instinct of sympathy and compassion, would surely teach a different lesson! And is it not the glory of the Gospel of Christ that it has a message of love even for the lost? To rescue the perishing, to stretch out the arm of a divine compassion to the degraded and depraved, to embrace with the tenderness of a divine love, even those who are rebellious and defiant, this is the spirit of the Master's life and teaching. Oh, then, if we are to be 'witnesses for Him,' if we are to give evidence that there dwells in us the mind that was in Christ Jesus, we, too, must seek out in the spirit of His self-sacrificing love the lost and wandering sheep, and bring them home with rejoicing to the fold of Jesus.

But as we look out into the world and see all its carelessness, and apathy, and indifference, and sin, does not the thought come to us, that the task is beyond our power? We know not by what means we can accomplish a work like that which lies before us. Turn we again then for a moment to stand once more with Jesus and His disciples upon the Mount of the Ascension when this charge was given. Truly 'the harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few.' How hopeless seemed the enterprise which the Lord intrusted to their care, 'to be witnesses for Him to the uttermost parts of the earth, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.'

III. It is impossible to imagine anything more hopelessly beyond the power of the disciples of the Lord. A handful of men, not of exalted station, not distinguished by wealth or learning or position, and yet to them is given the gigantic task, to them the grand commission to evangelise the world. But the excellency of the power was of God. When Christ called them to the service He armed them with His power: 'Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you'; 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' Does Moses shrink back in the consciousness of his own weakness from the grand work to which God called him? 'Certainly I will be with thee,' is the secret of his strength. Does Joshua doubt whether he is able to accomplish the work which Moses had left unfinished? 'Be strong and very courageous; as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee.' Does S. Paul pray to be delivered from a burden too great for him to bear? 'My grace is sufficient for thee, My strength is made perfect in weakness.' And so for evermore until Christ's work on earth is done and His kingdom is established, He will qualify those whom He appoints, He will arm those whom

He sends to the battle-field. His presence is the source of strength, His promise gives the assurance of success. Who dreams that spiritual victories can be won by human agency alone? Who dares to doubt that God is able now as then to equip His servants for His work and give them power to accomplish His great purposes of love?

Hopeless and impossible!—yes, as man judges, but with God nothing is impossible. Faith laughs at impossibilities, for all things are possible to him that believeth.

'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' Apart from Christ ye can do nothing. Hopeless then indeed! As well might you stand by the seashore and bid the rising tides of ocean fall back at your command, or seek with your will to control the tempestuous ocean and bid the wind be still; as well stand by the bedside of the dead and call back the departed spirit to its deserted tenement, as by any power you possess to win a soul to Christ. It matters not whether in the ardour of a grateful enthusiasm fired with zeal and energy you go forth to call the distant heathen to the service of the Lord, or whether in some village Sunday school you seek to lead a little child to Jesus; for every service in the cause of Christ you need a power divine, and for you, if you will trust Him, the promise of the Lord is true, you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and in the strength of that power you shall be 'witnesses for Him.'

This then is what the world needs, and what Christ calls for is that we should be 'witnesses unto Him.' J. F. KITTO.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL.

The Gospel for Ascension Day.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. S. MARK xvi. 19-20.

THE week we have just closed, as you will all remember, is the great Feast of the Ascension of our blessed Lord into heaven. That great feast closed the earthly life of our blessed Lord. It set visibly upon that life the great signet of the truth of God. And whilst the Resurrection of the Lord was unseen by human eye, inasmuch as His appearing to His disciples afterwards was enough to make quite certain to them the fact of the Resurrection, and so the mystery was hidden by the curtain which God drew over it, the Ascension into heaven was seen by the eye of man; because there

being certain works to fulfil, it was needful that it should be seen, and it was seen with every circumstance which could draw attention to it. It was not in the obscurity of the night; it was not amidst the disturbance of some mighty whirlwind; it was at one of those calm moments of deep intercourse between the Lord and His people that this mighty wonder happened. He led them out to the hill where He had promised to meet them, and on its bare side, where concealment and mistake were impossible, even as He blessed them, He was separated from them and taken up into heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. In that open, cloudless sky of the brilliant East, this wonder was wrought. They saw the Ascension of the Lord and saw Him under that cloudy canopy which, like some heaven-descended banner, floated in the still blue ether—saw Him wrapped in its folds and sheltered from their eager sight, as He accomplished His return into the heaven which He had left for man. And in one sense, this was the end of our blessed Lord's work for us men, the end of it, so far as concerned this particular portion of the creation of God. He had now been through every appointed stage. The eternal Word becoming Man had come under the conditions of time, and so had fulfilled, as the will of the Father was, each separate act of the work of our redemption, slowly, gradually, calmly, so that the eye might rest upon it. He had been born; He had grown like others of us from infancy to youth, and from youth to manhood. He had fulfilled every law; the law of obedience to parents, the law of daily growth in grace; the law of learning from the teachers of the law what the law of God was. He had laboured at His reputed father's trade; he had come forth from that retirement, and had filled Judæa with His ministry and with His miracles of power, and then had yielded Himself up to His enemies; had suffered, had died, was laid in the grave—laid in it a day and part of the two others which He had prophesied; He rose again and tarried forty days upon the earth to confirm the faith of the disciples, and to do we know not what other acts of mystery connected with our salvation. And now the end was come. He mounts up again to the heaven that He had left. Their eyes can no longer track His course of light, they look steadfastly up into the air as He goes up with the eye of longing affection, with the eye of deep reverential inquisition, but the cloud received Him out of their sight. He is gone. No more will He be seen standing by them on the lake side; no more that mysterious meeting by the fire of coals, with the fish that He had prepared and the bread ready to His breaking; no more will that voice speak to them His peace—He is gone, received up into heaven. Thither their eye—the eye, that is, of their body—could not follow, but He was revealed to them as He sat at the right hand of God.

Now, in one sense, this was the end—the end of His emptying Himself for our sakes of His glory; the end of His suffering, of His slow waiting while the will of God wrought itself out. The end had come. The great exultation had succeeded. He had ascended up into the heaven where He was before.

I. But in another and higher sense it was not the end, and it is of great moment that we thoroughly realise this for the strengthening of our hearts in this our time of trouble. His work was not yet finished, rather we may say it had reached a grander state of development than ever before. That sitting of His at the right hand of the Father was not a negative repose. Still the mystery of these words which He gave them, 'My Father worketh hitherto,' still these were being fulfilled, although He had ascended up into heaven again, still He was doing, still He is doing a work, first, for man, and, secondly, with man. A work for man. He sketches it out in many sayings to His disciples. 'I go to prepare a place for you'; 'In My Father's house are many mansions'; those mansions in which humanity was not; those mansions in which the blessed spirits were, but to which a child of Adam had never yet mounted, to them He, the second Adam, the head of the human family, ascended up that He might draw His brethren after Him. 'I go to prepare a place for you.' And that place He prepares, observe, by His intercession for us. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us,' on that throne at the right hand of God—the throne of His power—for that is the meaning of it—the power of the throne of Majesty; it is but another way of declaring that same truth, 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth.' On that throne of mighty power He maketh intercession, He pleads His death once on Calvary. He shows, as Man, His wounds, whereby He wrought salvation for us. He presents in Himself the whole human family acceptable to the Father, because He is one with them. He represents it to the Father as worthy of the love of the Eternal One. For as the Father loveth Him, so loveth He His own, and as the Father is in Him so is He in His. And, therefore, day by day, He maketh intercession, pleads for His Church, and offers up to-day the prayers of His Church. How else could they mount up to the heavenly throne? Surely, otherwise, they were like the smoke on a day when the wind scatters and beats it back, so that its column is broken by contrary gales and it is flattened down again upon the earth to which it belongs. And such were our prayers and our praises, if it was not that He drew them up through all this spreading ether, mingling them with the incense of His own prevailing intercession, so that the prayers of the saints mount up pure to the throne of the Majestyon high. 'He ever liveth to make

intercession for us,' presenting each one of us, who thus believe in Him, as precious before the throne of His Father.

II. But, secondly, He is working not only for us, but with us. We need, greatly, to let this truth sink into our hearts. We can imagine, without much effort, how He did work with man when He was upon the earth. We read of the leper coming to Him to be cleansed, and we can see Him, in our mind's eye, reaching out that hand, incapable of being touched by pollution, and healing the leper. We can see Him giving sight to the blind, rebuking the fever, and we can even hear that voice of power speaking to the dead, and the dead living. We can understand His work with man. We can see Him by works of love winning the poor in heart; we can see Him, by speaking at once of judgment and mercy drawing them after Him to Himself, and sending them forth with the healing spirit. But it requires a greater faith surely to appreciate the truth that He is doing this now amongst us, just as really as He did when He stood under that sun of Palestine and wrought these works in the sight of men. But it is so, He has but imported into His work all the might of His omnipotence, He is at the right hand of power, and yet He is with us, beside us. 'Where two or three are gathered together in His name He is in the midst of them'; with us in this church to-day; with us speaking through the lessons we have read; with us through the ordinance of preaching; out of the mouth of the feeblest of His own, still speaking His own word of power to heart after heart. We know the conversion, the breaking of hearts, the lifting up of spirits, generation after generation, that have been going on in His Church. And how went they on, but that He was amongst His people, working with them as He worked of old. It is but that He has given that presence which He veiled under similes, concealed in His word, yet known to the spirit which watches for Him. When He was upon the earth He had to go forth and make His word known; He had made Himself subject to the conditions of space. He was weary in the heat when he had to go to speak at Samaria for the saving of one, and in Judæa for the saving of another. Now, all space has contracted itself into a point underneath the feet of that, His throne of glory, and now, by the power of the Godhead, He is with every one of His saints in all their earthly toil and tumult, and passionate sorrow, working with them till He brings each one of them to His glory. Working in your hearts to-day, if you will open that heart to Him; speaking home to you things concerning Himself, not leaving it to others; but Himself, by the Spirit of His power and of His love, speaking home to each: 'I am with thee, lean thou thy burthen upon Me; I will bear thee; I will carry thee; I will save thee.' Working with as He worked for man.

III. And as it is thus true of each separate soul, so it is true in the great world-history. All things have been ordered by Him for the elect's sake. Each of us in the singleness of our own separate life is before Him as if there were none but ourselves in this peopled earth; and that love is ours, that opening ear heareth our cry: that bosom on which S. John so loved to pillow his head, is ready, too, to take the burthen of this life of ours and to breathe from its deep recesses of peacefulness, peace unto our spirit. How could we otherwise bear the mighty trials which beset our spiritual life—the temptations to come short. They shut their eyes to it who do not know this truth, because they dare not look at it.

IV. Once more, in this, too, is the real secret of all labour for Christ. Why is it that men so soon wax weary in labour? How is it that there have come amongst us such low standards of giving? How comes it that we think it enough, if out of the abundance that is given to many of us, we give but the paring and the offscouring of our abundance to Him? How is it we give the day to our work and the night to our pleasure, and think it much if we remember Him in a hurried prayer, that we feel rather glad to have said? Because, His presence is not by us; because we do not realise that His eye —the discriminating eye which saw the poor widow offer her mite and the rich man cast his empty unrewarded gift into the treasury—that discriminating eye is beside us now. It is that that makes our labour so little and our gifts so poor. If you and I can get into His presence, go, as she did, who brought the alabaster box and knelt at His feet in the house of Simon the leper; hear His voice; see the brow that thorns have bound, mark the hands the nails have pierced —if we did but thus see Him beside us, should we not love to offer our very hearts to Him?

BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

The Significance of the Ascension.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. S. MARK xvi. 19.

HOW many are the thoughts which crowd upon us as we strive to grasp the reality and significance of our Lord's Ascension!

I. It was the end of the work of Redemption. Begun in the humiliation of Christmas, when to deliver man 'He humbled Himself to be born of a Virgin,' that work finds its end in the glorious exaltation of the Ascension, when He that humbled Himself was indeed exalted. It was the end of all that life of obedience, which the first half of the Christian year calls us to study, the end of all

those mysteries of sorrow, which we contemplated in Lent, the end even of His glorious Resurrection, for He said, 'Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father.'

II. It was the final triumph of goodness. When we saw those dear hands, which had been occupied only in works of love, those dear feet, which had gone on so many errands of mercy, nailed to the Cross, it seemed as though goodness had been utterly defeated.

And is it not often a sore trial now to see the wicked 'flourishing like a green bay tree' (Ps. xxxvii. 36), while the good suffer and are wronged? The Ascension reminds us that there is another life, where the judgments of this world may be reversed, and 'they that sow in tears shall reap in joy' (Ps. cxxxvi. 6), another world in which we shall see the final triumph of goodness, and the utter destruction of sin.

III. It was the exaltation of humanity. Humanity, with all its splendid hopes, had never dreamed of any future like this. Humanity, in its sorrows and disappointments, in its weakness and sin! Was it possible that God could stoop so low to lift man up so high? Humanity taken into God, and reigning at the right hand of the Father!

IV. It told of the continuity of life. It was the same Jesus, the Son of Mary, who had lived and died on earth. That life of sorrow, but of wondrous beauty, finds its fruition in a better world than this, but it is the same life; death has not altered it, only freed it from the trammels of earth.

V. It inaugurated the reign of blessing: 'And He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven' (S. Luke xxiv. 50, 51). The last sight of Him is with hands raised in blessing, and so we now live under the benediction of those uplifted hands, for, 'when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men' (Eph. iv. 8). Let us realise that all gifts, both spiritual and temporal, come from Him, and so live that His benediction may be able to rest on all that we do.

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

Foreign Missions.

And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. S. MARK xvi. 15.

I. WHEN the Christian faith having begun its life almost immediately began to spread itself abroad, it was doing two things. It was justifying its Lord's prophecy, and it was realising its own nature. There came at first a moment's pause and

hesitation. We can see in those chapters of the Book of Acts how for a few years the faith could not quite believe the story of itself which was speaking at its heart. It heard the ends of the earth calling it, but it could not see beyond the narrow coasts of Judea. But the beauty of those early days is the way in which it could not be content with that. It is not the ends of the earth calling in desperation for something which was not made to help them, which had no vast vocation, which at last started out desperately to do a work which must be done, but for which it felt no fitness in itself. The heart of the Church feels the need of going as the ends of the world desire that it should come. It is 'deep answering to deep'! He who studies the early expansion of the Christian truth feels himself standing between a world which must be saved and a power of salvation which must give itself away. The world is only half conscious of its need. The power of salvation does not understand the tumult at its heart; but both are real, and they are reaching out for one another. And the student of those days feels the inspiration as he stands between them. It is like standing between the sun and the earth in the morning.

II. Missions are not an occasional duty, but the essential necessity of Christian life. It is not an exceptional enterprise to which man is occasionally summoned, it is the fundamental condition without which man cannot live. It is not like an army summoned once or twice a century to repulse a special foe, feeling itself unnatural, expecting from the moment of its enlistment, the time when it shall lay down its arms and go back to the works of peace. It is like the daily activity of the city, taken up naturally every morning, constituting the normal expression of the city's life, never to cease while the city lives, the pulse which shows at any moment what degree of vitality the city has—such is the missionary spirit to the Christian Church.

Of all I have been saying there has been one great, ever-instructive illustration in history, which is the experience of the Hebrew race. Have you ever thought how exactly the modern Christian who 'does not believe in foreign missions' corresponds to the Jew of the Old Testament? He has not indeed the excuse and self-explanation which the best Jews had. He does not say to himself as they said, that it is for a purpose and a deliberate design of God that his religion is shut up in himself and forbidden to go abroad. But, without the excuse or explanation, his condition is exactly the same as that of the old Jew. His is a perfect modern Judaism. Look at him. Conscious of privilege, perfectly aware that God has given to him truth and light which are inestimably precious, holding the tables of a divine law in his sanctuary, feeling the illumination of a

divine wisdom burn in the jewels of his breastplate, he is perpetually aware of how his life belongs to God, and, looking forth from the observatory of his privilege, he sees the whole dark world. Sometimes he pities it, sometimes he despises it, sometimes he almost hates it. We can see each of those three emotions, now one and now another, in the wonderfully distinct, expressive face of the Hebrew which looks out from the wondrous book.

This modern Hebrew sometimes recognises how the same spirit which is clear and strong in him shows signs of faint and feeble working in the great mass of uncalled, unprivileged humanity, just as the old Jew could not always shut his eyes and ears to the working of the Spirit of God among the Gentiles. Sometimes he hears the beating of the waves on their restriction, and catches glimpses of some possible day when they will break through and claim the world; but, for the present, now, he is here and the world is there—the river on this side and the sea on that side shut him in. He will not cross either of them to find those who lie beyond. He prays his prayers, and they are real prayers; he believes his truths, and they are real truths; he does his tasks, and they are real tasks—but what is the spiritual life of the Esquimaux among his snows, or the Asiatic in his jungle, is nothing in the world to him. The very question smites his ear with no reality.

III. Never can we forget that it is not by machineries or institutions, but only by human natures, only by men, that any great victory of light over darkness, of truth over error, is achieved. Therefore we pray and look and long for men. Let them appear, and all the apparatus of work may be most primitive and incomplete, still the work will be done. Let them be wanting, and with the most perfect apparatus there is no result. Institutions embody ideas and offer opportunities and hold results, but only men do the world's work. Very interesting, very precious is the Church as an organisation, with its history, its order, its symbols, and its forms; but 'how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!'

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

He is risen!

So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God. S. MARK xvi. 19.

THE signification of the Ascension is the significance, not of a transient act, but of an eternal condition, If you would understand it aright, read the Epistle to the Ephesians. That is emphatically the epistle of the heavenlies, the epistle of the Ascension,

and its best summary is given in the sister Epistle to the Colossians: 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.' The whole lesson of the Epistle is concentrated into the one word therefore at the beginning of the fifth chapter. Since Christ is in the heavenlies, since He hath risen in His glory, therefore, be ye imitators of Christ as dear children. Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us. *Sursum Corda!* Lift up your hearts! That is the lesson of the Ascension, and oh that we all had grace to say in answer, not only with our lips but in our lives: 'We lift them up unto the Lord.'

I. Think for a few moments of what the truth of Christ's Ascension means. It means that He who worked as the carpenter of Nazareth; He who played as a little child among its mountain flowers; He who was subject to His parents in a sweet earthly home; He who turned the water into wine at the village wedding-feast; He who on the mountain of the Beatitudes pointed to the lilies and the ravens as signs of His Father's care; He who said that without His Father not a sparrow falleth to the ground; He who sat at meat in the house of the publican; He who touched the leper and he was clean; He who suffered the woman who was a sinner to wet His feet with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head; He who said to the adulteress in the temple, 'Go, and sin no more'; He who wept silently at the tomb of Lazarus; He who shed hot tears over the obduracy of Jerusalem; He who on His Cross prayed for His murderers, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do';—it means that He, that same Jesus, He whose words we love, He whose life was love, He whose name is love, is now set in the heavenlies at God's right hand, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also that which is to come. It means this, and therefore in whatever aspect we look at it, it means a lesson of infinite hope; it means that He who died upon the Cross for man is the Lord of man, and that the judge of man is the Saviour of man. It means that we shall not be delivered up hereafter to the passionless retribution of blind material forces, but that a face like our own shall look down upon us, and that He shall deal with us who knoweth whereof we are made, and who remembereth that we are but dust. It means that, however deeply we have sinned in the past, in Him is power even on earth to forgive sins. It means that we can find strength in the present, because when He ascended up on high He received gifts for men, and He giveth His Holy Spirit to them that seek Him. It means that we can face the future without terror because His footsteps have illuminated even the dreary valley of the shadow of death; and since all this is involved in Ascension Day,

this forgiveness of the past, this strength in the present, this hope for the future, it were well for us, both as individuals and as a nation, if Ascension Day were more carefully commemorated, and if we dwelt more and more devoutly on that truth, 'He ascended into heaven.'

II. But besides our hope, let me show you for a moment how absolutely our faith must also depend on this Ascension of our Lord. If Christ be not ascended, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain. I think that if Christians dwelt more on the truth that their Lord is exalted on the throne of His Father's glory, they would have more of the calm and the quietness and the confidence of strength. How often have Christians gone rushing up in alarm to the Ark of God because to them it seems to be tottering! How often have they been thus led into the sins of cruelty and injustice, the using of unhallowed weapons in God's service, and the kindling of strange fires upon God's altars! Might they not learn from the example of Uzzah, that obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams? Yes; and even when the Ark of God is taken, when it is in the hands of the Philistines, when it has been carried in triumph into the very temple of Dagon, the Christians may still trust in the Lord and be doing good. Is Christ denied? Is Christ insulted? Is Christ betrayed? Well, the Christian, however sorrowful his heart may be, will not lose his calm or his courage. He believeth that the Lord is in heaven where He sitteth, that He sees it all, and that because He is omniscient and because He is eternal, He, in His own good time, will shine forth again, and for that time the Christians will humbly wait.

DEAN FARRAR.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS.

Ascension Day.

And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. 2 KINGS ii. 6.

HILE we are more or less familiar with the thought that the translation of Elijah is a type of the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, especially in the prayer of Elisha, 'Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me,' and the promise in answer, 'If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee,'—we may also no less fitly see in that story a type of these two things as well, the history of Christ's Church and of the growth of the Christian soul.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

I. The little acts of the true prophets on their way, and the history and the very names of the places they passed, are full of mystery, and serve to instruct and remind us of the great practical doctrine of our Lord's Ascension, His continued and eternal presence with His Church. It is written, 'It came to pass, when the Lord would take Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.' What was Gilgal? It was the place where God's people had first encamped when they had crossed over Jordan with Joshua, and come into the promised land; the base of operation from which they started to the conquest of the country, and where the whole nation of them that had been born in the wilderness were circumcised. The name was given to the place at that time, for by the circumcision, said Joshua, 'I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.'

And they who came with Jesus through the waters of baptism, to possess the true kingdom of God, and the land of better promise, they also started from the place of the circumcision. Jesus Himself had preached only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; His Apostles were themselves chosen from among the circumcised, and preached alway to the Jews first. All of them had their home, their affections, their memories and associations of holiness, under the law and in the circumcision, as Jesus had lived under the circumcision with them; so it was natural to them, it was what suited their desires, their tastes and habits, to live under the circumcision with Him, even after He was gone.

II. But no, the word went forth, 'The Lord hath sent Me to Bethel'; and the Church, Jewish as it was, cried out, 'As the Lord liveth, and as Thy soul liveth, I will not leave Thee.' The Lord called them, like their first father, Abraham, to go out from their country and from their kindred, and from their own father's house, and He promised to make of them a great nation, a multitude that no man can number, a Holy Church throughout all the world; and they went—went with Him to Bethel. Bethel is, by interpretation, the House of God; it was the place where Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending between heaven and earth, and where he set up a pillar for a memorial to his sons, when they should possess the land of his sojourning. And S. Paul tells us what is now the house of God, the true and spiritual Bethel, 'the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.' It was to this that Jesus was going now, leaving the low ground of carnal ordinances, the low and mean eminence of the circumcision, for the free pure air of the true, holy mountain of the Lord. He went on to a nobler house of God, to build a Holy Catholic Church. And His followers went with Him still; they went down from their fancied height, to be on a level with other men counting loss for His sake those things that were

gain to them, and only resolved that, whatever they left, they would not leave Him. 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel.'

And there they tarried for a little while, as Elisha did with the sons of the prophets. In the house of God, the one faithful, unstained, and undivided Church, the faithful lived for a little while happily and in peace. If there were persecutions round them, if they were forced to flee for their lives from the face of those whom they longed to own as brethren, yet they had this comfort, that they dwelt in the house of God, that in all their troubles they saw the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. And in faith and purity and holiness they were happy—happy in the midst of outward trouble. But this happiness, sacred as it was, was not to last for ever. There came a warning from the Spirit of God, 'Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy head to-day?' and they sadly confessed, 'Yea, I know it!' And then Jesus said Himself, 'The Lord hath sent Me to Jericho.'

III. Now Jericho was the one city in the land of Israel that lay under the curse of God. When it was taken by Joshua, it was, unlike all the other cities of Canaan, devoted to utter destruction; its spoil was wholly burnt in the midst of it, and a special curse was pronounced on any man who should ever dare to rebuild it—which was fulfilled to the letter, ages afterwards, in the reign of Ahab. And Jesus had led His Church also to an accursed city. There are but two cities now standing on the earth, of the number of those against which the Lord has spoken His purposes of wrath, Jerusalem and Rome. Other cities which God has doomed to desolation have now been long desolate, Nineveh, and Babylon, and the great cities of Ammon and Moab and Edom, almost their names are vanished, and their place knows them no more. These two only remain, the holy city that has fallen away, and the city that is unholy from first to last. These two, we cannot doubt, are to be preserved to the end of time, and to fulfil a part, strangely different, yet perhaps strangely alike, in the dispensation of mercy and of wrath that God will reveal in the last days. And as it was in the great accursed city that Jesus for a while took up His abode; in the heart of the kingdom of the last great, strong and terrible beast, and the throne of the great Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, in the destined capital of Antichrist, the last and worst enemy of Him and of His Church. And there also His disciples followed Him; their word was still, 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.' There they gathered together the greatest and most glorious of His Churches of old; there His most noble Apostles spent

their lives and shed their blood; there, perhaps, more of His servants gave their lives for His Name's sake than in the whole world besides. When the strongest government the world has ever seen was arrayed against them, when the whole world cried out for their destruction, and it seemed to rest with one man to destroy them, who had both the power and the will, still the Church gathered closer round the seat of that government and the throne of that man; they increased their own danger by rivalling and competing with his authority in his own city. Jesus had called them there, and there they would stay, in spite of emperors and armies and persecutions and proscriptions. 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee!' And though (as happens to all, even the most faithful of human souls) the Church there has failed to keep itself untouched by the accursed thing, but has meddled with the gold of this world and the garments of Babylon, and drunk too much of the spirit of the heathen empire that it has overcome, still He does not forget the old faithfulness; still, we may be sure, He bears witness to the righteous there: 'I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith.' He remembers greater martyrs than Antipas, even Peter and Paul, and a countless host of others whose names are in the Book of Life, 'who were slain among them where Satan dwelleth'; and even if He hath a few things against them, He will not cast them off.

But this is not the last of His wanderings. 'The Lord hath sent Me to Jordan. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.' This is the first time that the prophet who wrote the book says 'they two,' for now they were more alone than ever. More alone, but closer to each other; more together, the further they are from any aid or any love of the world. They go by a path they had not known, nor their father. Their fathers passed over Jordan on dry land to the country God had sworn to give them; but they must go the reverse way, back, as it seemed, into the waste howling wilderness. But where the Lord sent him Elijah will go; where Elijah goes, Elisha will follow: 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.' And so Jesus leads us to Jordan. Away from the holy city, the city of the Church of God; away from the accursed city, the city of the kingdom of this world; alone into the wilderness; Christ goes and His own must follow Him. It is 'they two' now; for though the Church is not one but many, it is not the Church (at least, not yet), but the single separate Christian soul, that Jesus leads thither. The Church may stand by to bless and pray, like the fifty men of the sons of the prophets, who stood to

view afar off when they two went over Jordan; but there comes a time when the Christian soul must leave even the Church behind, must be alone with its Saviour, and follow Him to the border of the wilderness, to the river of judgment. Turning the back on God's gifts and promises of this world, not caring to follow the steps of others, holy though they were, that have gone before us, the soul is left alone with Christ, and has no thought, no duty, no hope but the one absorbing necessity of keeping close to Him. That time may come earlier to some souls—in some trial that searches the heart, an abyss of doubt, or a sea of trouble, when all His waves and storms are gone over it; yet it remembers Him from the land of Jordan. It will come to every soul, at latest, in the hour of death. Then no holy memories, no mighty company, will avail; the soul is alone, and can have no companion but one; well for her if she still can say, 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee!' and, they two go on! All alone, forgetting and forsaking all beside Him, the Christian soul goes where He has gone, down into the burning valley, through the dark forest, to the brink of the rapid, turbid river. And further yet: those footsteps do not halt upon the brink, but pass on, between two overhanging crests of water, which stand heaped up, ready to break over the head of him that crosses there. But neither loneliness nor terror will stay true love: 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.' 'As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee!' and they two go on, on through the bed of Jordan.

And what is there on the other side? Ah, there the resemblance ceases. There come a chariot of fire and horses of fire, but it is not to part them both asunder: the Christian is happier than Elisha, inasmuch as His Master is mightier. He who has led us on so far is already gone up into heaven; gone, not in a whirlwind, but in the peaceful morning sky, hidden from sight in a soft white cloud. But He is not gone away from us, that we should be left on earth; 'the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof' has not left His people desolate and unprotected, nor may His servant rend his clothes in grief that his Father has gone. 'I will not leave you fatherless,' He said, 'I will come to you.' And those to whom He has come, who have gone on with Him, when they two have gone on together, through Bethel, through Jericho, through Jordan, then they shall go to Him. The chariot of fire and horses of fire wait for them too; their Master is not taken away from their head, but only gone first where they shall go; 'their King shall pass before them, and the Lord at the head of them.'

W. H. SIMCOX.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Lessons of the Ascension.

He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. S. Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

OUR Lord and Master Jesus Christ was crucified on Calvary, died on the Cross. He really died. There was no doubt whatever about it. It was proved by His enemies. First of all there was the negative proof. They did not break His legs because they found that He was already dead. Of course they fulfilled the prophecy that 'a bone of Him should not be broken,' and of course the immaculate Lamb of God could not—the Lamb that was sacrificed was to be sacrificed whole. Then they opened His side, to make what was sure doubly sure, and so fulfilled another prophecy, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced.' When the Christ was dead upon the Cross, they took Him down and they laid Him in the tomb, and they sealed the tomb. And over against the tomb sat His friends, that the whole thing might be certain; as, we repeat in the Creed, 'was crucified, dead, and buried.'

And then the third day, as we all believe, He rose again out of the tomb. Or ever the sun had set his early morning shafts among the green olive-trees, He, the Sun of Righteousness, had arisen with healing in His wings. And He remained on the earth with us forty days. First of all He was with His people forty days to show Himself alive by many infallible proofs. He showed Himself to ones, He showed Himself to twos, He showed Himself to threes, and then to five hundred brethren at once, that there might be no doubt whatever. He also remained with His people forty days on the earth to comfort them. Peter must be consoled, Magdalene must be comforted, Thomas's faith must be strengthened. And so the Good Shepherd of the sheep having well housed His flock, strengthened them and established them, comforted them and consoled them, took them out as far as Bethany, and went up into heaven.

Bethany was the one spot where He had received, since He left His Mother's home, kindness. Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus. And there, too, He took them, where memories were most tender, most dear. He also took them to Bethany, for at Bethany the greatest and last of all His great miracles was done, the great Resurrection; for it was at Bethany that Lazarus was raised from the dead. And having taken them out as far as Bethany, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. The world had rejected and cursed Him: He left the world with blessing.

ASCENSION DAY

I want you to notice how all through our Lord's life you can never find one shadow of resentment for the ill-treatment that He received. His chosen Twelve desert Him, one betrays Him, and on Easter evening when He meets them He does not reprove them, but He gives them what they most want, the blessing of peace. And He takes them out as far as Bethany, and before He leaves the world that had despised and rejected Him, like Jacob the patriarch of old, lifted up his hands and blessed his brethren, so our great Patriarch lifted up His hands and blessed them; He leaves the last blessing; a cloud from the presence of the angels sweeping down received Him out of their sight.

And then there stood the angels as they did at the Resurrection, to chide those who remained. At the Resurrection they asked, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here; He is risen.' And here the angels say, 'Why gaze ye up into heaven? The same Lord shall come again as ye have seen Him go up into heaven.' So our Master ascended, and the dew of the morning is exhaled and the brightest flower that ever grew upon earth is plucked. He ascended up into heaven.

We keep this day in order to impress upon our minds this fact that He went up into the heavens. And there are two corollaries to this fact that I should like to place before you this morning. The first is this, that our Master ascended up into the heavens, really, truly, with His Body, as described in the glorious gospel. Then His redemptive work is crowned and finished. We speak, and we speak truly of the finished work of Christ. Whether you feel it or whether you do not, He died for you. His work is completed; justified by His Resurrection, crowned by His Ascension into the heavens. We are by this the blood-bought children of God. 'Ye are redeemed with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and your spirits, which are God's.' 'You are not your own, you are redeemed with a price.' The old mediæval writers said that not one drop of the Lord's blood was spilt in vain upon the earth, but that all along the *via dolorosa* to Calvary the angels stooped and gathered up every drop of blood which was spilt, and that when our Lord and Master ascended and went up into the heavens He carried with Him the blood of the everlasting covenant, as the high priest of old into the Holy of Holies; and, as our great High Priest, lived ever to make intercession for us. I hope that this day you all of you know what it is to believe in the finished work of Christ—'I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him unto the last great day,'—that you trust in and lean upon your Saviour; that you can say to yourself, 'He died for me and I am redeemed.' Can any one man die for

another? No; but He was the Son of Man and also God the Son. Could any one man take away the sins of the world? No; but the Eternal Son of God has come and taken away the sins of the whole world. From out the bosom of the Father He came, back to the bosom of the Father He went. The whole thing is raised upon a higher plane, up to the infinite. So we who believe in the deity of Christ see in His Ascension the natural consequence of the Incarnation, and the completion and the finish of the glorious work of Redemption. I hope your souls feel this, that you can trust all that you have to your Saviour, that you could die, as the old expression is, you could die happy to-night, believing in Him.

H. STANTON.

The Comfort of the Ascension.

We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. HEBREWS iv. 15.

THIS would be a cold, dark world to live in if there were no such thing as sympathy to be found in it. Sympathy, the magic bond, not between man and man alone, but between man and the lower creation even. Sympathy, which consists not only in the utterance of kindly words which assure us that our fellow-men feel for us, and with us, in our troubles and anxieties, but which is conveyed very often in a mere look, communicated by a pressure of the hand, made known by a mere touch, when no single word is even uttered.

A yearning for sympathy is a part of our very nature. And how many of us have known by experience the comfort of the mere presence of one we loved and trusted, in the dark hour of trial. We valued that friendship then indeed. And yet that good friend attempted no comfort in words—said nothing; merely came and sat by our side, but conveyed so much in looks and manner, and showed in a thousand ways, that he knew, and shared, in a certain sense, our sorrow; and knew also how sorely we needed the true sympathy of a true heart.

But I know you are saying to yourselves that this is a strange line of thought for this day of triumphant gladness, the Saviour's Coronation Day!

I. 'The Ascension is Christ's triumph, and it is ours. It is the end of the long, hard, mournful way that began at Bethlehem, and our love is called on to be glad for Christ's sake,' and we *will* be glad.

But even as we rejoice in our Master's triumph, and even as we try to lift our thoughts to the bright home of many mansions, and the place He has gone to prepare for His people, we remember that we have not yet apprehended. We are still struggling here below. The journey lies before us. There must be many a hard fight first, many a trial, perhaps many a bitter fall. Many difficulties lie before us. Many sorrows must be borne, many a cup of suffering drained, before the bright crown shall be given to those who have 'endured to the end,' and been 'faithful unto death.'

Yes, and the thought of all this saddens us, as indeed it must. But it is a thought which should on this day immediately give place to another, brighter, more glorious thought. And it is this: the Lord Christ who ascends into the heavens this day has worn our flesh, 'borne our griefs, carried our sorrows.'

Henceforth 'we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted (tried) like as we are.' He has felt all that man has felt, or ever can feel. He has suffered all that man ever can suffer. Of all troubled, suffering ones on earth He can say, 'I know their sorrows.'

II. Christ our Lord is gone, and we are left without the comfort of His visible Presence to pursue the journey of life, to encounter its perils, hardships, troubles. But, thank God, we know that at the right hand of God is One, in form like unto the sons of men, who knows men's sorrows.

Fear we not, then, to take up our cross, forsaking all for Him. He bids us follow Him, showing us His blessed footprints on the rough, painful way. Let us look on to the end to which He is leading us. And when we feel faint and despondent, and weary with the journey, let us say, 'He knows my sorrows, knows them, feels them, shares them all.'

J. B. C. MURPHY.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Necessity of Suffering.

Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer. S. Luke xxiv. 45, 46.

I. ' CCORDING to the Scriptures!' The Scriptures said that Christ must suffer; there lay the discovery that turned darkness into light. But why? How does it help matters to find that the most terrible misery has been a necessity that could not have been avoided? How does it open the understanding to discover that God Himself had allowed, ordained, and sanctioned a shameful and savage death? It would have been bad enough to have recognised that hideous tyranny in the men who had done Christ to His ruin; how could it be a relief to make God an accomplice in their sin, or if not an accomplice, an impotent spectator who foresaw it and would not help or prevent it? What is the relief in acknowledging that Christ suffered 'according to the Scriptures'?

We must start first from the absolute conviction that lay at the heart of every Jew, the conviction of the goodness of God. God must be good—that made the Jew's faith. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' That challenge never waits through all the bewildering paradox of experience for him; it was impossible for the Jew to impute to God anything which he regarded as arbitrary, wilful, or immoral; he might impute to God what we now think wrong, but never what he himself thought so. It is true, forgetting this, that we are puzzled perhaps when the Jew speaks of God as, for instance, 'the potter with power over the clay,' 'hardening Pharaoh's heart,' 'electing Jacob,' 'rejecting Esau'—that argument has for him always in the background the assumption, not that God may do anything He chooses, moral or immoral, because of His omnipotence, but that the thing must be morally right because God does it. God is the judge of all the earth! That is the primary premise, and that premise involves that, as judge, His might must be governed by equity, His will must work according to the law of righteousness. The plea for God rests on the primary belief that,

being God, He cannot conceivably do anything illegal or bad. How could He sit in His seat of judgment if He did? It is as in our Lord's own parable, when the claim of the master to do what he would with his own is derived not from his absolute power, but from his innate goodness. 'Is thine eye evil because I am good?' 'I am good!' That is the heart of the matter. No one whose life stood in evil could venture to demand absolute confidence in his mastership, but granting that ineradicable goodness, then, is it not lawful for such a one whose action is bound to spring from so unsuspecting a cause to be trusted to do what he will with his own? God is good—that first and that last! Let nothing ever dim that primal fact. Out of that belief, we know, springs all the agony of Job; storms of passionate doubt sweep over his soul, yet, though he die, he will not forswear his conviction that God can justify Himself at the bar of moral conscience; his conviction is that His supreme decision, when it is known, must be given according to the law of righteousness. God is good! Anything which happens according to the will of God must somehow be consistent with goodness. It is the key to the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, for only out of the clash and collision of this conviction with the terrible facts of life do the higher minds among the Jews press on towards the solution of what is to them so dreadful a mystery. Other nations feel no torment at the sight of evil, because for them the gods are indifferent to moral goodness, and, therefore, unaware of the problem, they seek for no answer to it, and find no revelation. But the Jew, forced to search for the verification of his belief that God is good, seeks, and is given the Scriptures. 'God is good!' And with that unshaken assumption in the background of their minds, these loyal Jews, the Lord's Apostles, opened their understanding to the fact that Christ had suffered 'according to the Scriptures.'

II. 'According to the Scriptures!' By law, then, according to fixed conditions in coherence with consistent purposes. The mere fact of anticipation is a witness against its being accidental or irrational; it could not have been foretold if there were not some reasonable principle at the back. The appeal to prophecy, as we have so often said in this place, is the appeal to spiritual science, to spiritual law. The first signal that we are on the track of a genuine law lies in our powers to anticipate its recurrence, to foretell an event. According to the Scriptures the Cross of Christ was no savage breach of continuity, no wild and paralysing defeat of the Lord's goodness; it moved along the normal lines of the human story; vast masses of ancient experience corresponded with it, corroborated, interpreted, and justified it; and not only common-sense, but that broad set of experiences through which and in which men

of old times, moved by the Holy Ghost, had detected the special working of the mind of God—the Cross tallied with those selected and inspired experiences which had been mentioned in the Scriptures, experiences which we know very well are none the less expressive and none the less inspired because they must speak to us from the lips of unnumbered and unnamed Babylonian exiles. The fixed methods by which God has handled the noblest spirits through long centuries all move forward, it would appear, steadily towards the revolution, toward these ultimate claims. The sufferings had been foreknown, measured, discounted; they had fallen on Christ; not indeed by the desire of God. God forbid! God abhorred them as a father abhors the suffering which falls on his son, but according to the inevitable workings of the devil's own will which God had beforehand recognised and had set Himself to traverse and to triumph over. Christ had set Himself to suffer. He could not come amongst men without the certain issue that they by wicked hands would take Him and slay Him. Nor were their hands less wicked because God had in forethought allowed for their actions.

III. 'According to the Scriptures.' As with the Master, so with His sons. We have each for himself to learn the meaning of the old refrain of the Creed, 'according to the Scriptures.' For it is strange how we flinch and stagger when we ourselves first fall under the stroke of the same law which made it inevitable that Christ should suffer. He must. The conditions of human life into which He placed Himself had, through sin and wrong and perversion, become such that for Him to enter them was to suffer; He knew it, and knowing it, He came, and by so coming, chose suffering itself and death itself as the way along which He would pass, and every one who would follow Him must take up His Cross—they must suffer.

We have all heard it, all said it over and over again; in prayers, in hymns, in sermons. The message is for ever being repeated, and yet still, somehow, when the blow smites, when pain first makes its horrible power visible over those we love, when our own life begins to wither under the misery of decay, when we first feel that melancholy withdrawal of all pleasant things, and weariness of the burdensome days, and the bitterness of grief and the fierce fangs of death, we are caught anew as if by surprise; we become indignant and are stricken down. We cannot believe that anything so dreadful should be permitted to happen. 'Why does God allow it; how can He be good and fatherly if He stands off and does nothing?' All the primeval perplexities shake us just as if the Book of Psalms had never been written, nor the anguish of Job recorded, nor that Christ had ever died to save us. Will you, when such hours of sorrow

befall you, listen for this solemn voice of Him who is at your side, and then, though you will be clouded with angry sorrow yourself, too clouded to notice Him, and will be saying, 'O fool and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written, ought not you to suffer, is it not according to Scriptures?' you and your sorrow will have passed into the rank of those whose stories lie there recorded for you under the selective ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now you know what they all mean as they cried aloud and tossed themselves to and fro, and roamed hither and thither in their desolation, seeking for God, desiring comfort and finding none; out of all these long centuries they call to you, call to you as friends who are touched with the spirit of your infirmities. 'Oh, we too felt,' they say to you, 'as you do to-day—to us long ago it was intolerable—the leash of pain, the misery of a lost love.' Always it has been so; no new temptation has befallen you, no unforeseen disaster; it is the great law under which the story of human redemption has ever gone forward. These are its fixed laws, these are its immortal methods; it must be so since sin can only so be purged. It has been so with all those who have ever entered deeply into the things of God; the Scriptures are a record how ancient your experience is, how consistent, how inevitable, how natural, 'according to the Scriptures.'

Just recognise that it is a natural expectation that is come about, that something at last happens according to a common human law, a universal experience; a law, and, if a law, then a law which God has taken account of, a law through which He has made known His innermost secret.

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

Practical Christianity.

Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? PSALM XV.

THE Fifteenth Psalm is selected as one of the proper Psalms for Ascension Day, and it is therefore clear that our Church considers it answers some of the questions which Ascension Day is meant to awaken in our hearts. There are some latent reasons which probably lead many of us to place it, as it were, on a lower level in our reflection and reverence than other great holy days in the year. Perhaps, we excuse ourselves for not thinking much of it by saying that this is a great matter, too high for us, and that because we are not highminded we will not exercise ourselves in it. We almost flatter ourselves that this is due to our humility. We are not monks, we say, or nuns, living a cloistral life, gazing, as Fra Angelico, in

enraptured vision on the pure, sweet faces—faces soft and pure as flowers seen between the golden harp-strings, aflame with the light of love; perhaps if we were, we might meditate long and often on the Ascension, and think of those things that are above; perhaps if we had sometimes, even for a few hours at a time, the retirement and recollectiveness of the monastic cell, our spirits, too, might soar sunwards with wings as eagles, we should run and not be weary, we should walk and not faint. But, alas, with us it is not so, we say; we dwell in Mesech, and are constrained to have our habitation amongst the tents of Kedar; we live amid bustle and distraction and occupations we regard as ignominious, duties on which we, perhaps, look down as a burden. Let us content ourselves, we say, with this every-day life: we cannot but think sometimes of the human Christ, of the suffering Christ, of the dead Christ, of the Christ who played as a little child around the fields of His native Nazareth, and about the Christ who walked a homeless man along the plains of Nazareth; but thoughts of the ascended Christ, of the risen Christ, of the glorified Christ, of Christ sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on High, of Him who has in His hand the seven stars, and whose voice is as the sound of many waters—to think of Him, we say, would be to us like following the wandering fire. When we indulge in such thoughts, like the yet unchastened knight of old, we are inclined to say, thinking of every evil word we have ever spoken, every evil thought we have thought, and every evil deed we ever did, 'This quest is not for me.' Lifting up our eyes, we find ourselves alone in the land of sand and of thorns, we are thirsty even unto death, and we, too, cry, 'This quest is not for me.'

In such thoughts it is Satan who comes to us, though he tries to pass himself off as an angel of light.

Religion is not a far-off, but a pressing and every-day affair. This lesson of the Old Testament is identically the same as the words of Christ, 'The kingdom of God is within you.' It is monstrous to suppose that God only placed this high ideal of holiness within the reach of a few favoured persons. Christ came as the carpenter of Nazareth to show us that it was otherwise. The possibility of it is not interfered with in any way by humble positions or small employments. The very humblest of mankind may be the greatest saint of God. To talk of ignominious occupations or of vulgar duties shows deeply-seated error. The duty of a shoeblack may be made as sacred as the duty of a king. It has been truly said that if two archangels were sent to earth, one to cleanse the street and the other to rule the empire, each would regard the one task as noble as the other, because each could see in it the all-ennobling will of God. It is only small and ignorant natures which shrink from lowly tasks. In truth,

nothing can be ignoble which a noble purpose glorifies. The soul occupied with great ideas best performs the smallest duties. To keep the house of our soul in order due and pure, it has been wisely said, God must come down and dwell with it as the source of all its worth.

I. When David asked this memorable question, a question infinitely pressing upon all of us, 'Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, and who shall rest on Thy holy hill?' what sort of answer would you have expected? You might have expected him to say, perhaps, 'Priests who have been set apart for priestly consecration, or great leaders like Moses, holy and heroic, who have seen the bush burning in their heart, whose faces have shone as on Sinai from near communion with God; or great prophets, whose lives God Himself has touched with fire from off His altar; or holy men whose lives have been entirely spent in prayer and praise.' If David had given that answer, we should have thought it quite natural; we should have expected some marked consecration, some transcendent excellence, some spiritual absorption, as a necessary condition to any one who aspired to such near and continual access to God.

But what does David answer? Hear for yourself the answer in this Fifteenth Psalm: 'Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall rest upon Thy holy hill? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, loveth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart. He that useth no deceit with his tongue, nor hath done evil to his neighbour, and hath not slandered his neighbour. He that setteth not up himself, but is lowly in his own eyes, and maketh much of them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth unto his neighbour and disappointeth him not, even though it were to his own hurt. He that hath not put out his money to usury, nor taken reward against the innocent. Whoso doeth these things shall never fall.'

II. Here, then, you have the things necessary for the man who may claim the high blessing of God, which Ascension Day teaches us to desire. What are they? Strange, they are precisely those things that we should demand of the ordinary English gentleman, of the ordinary English tradesman, of the ordinary English working-man. And that this is no accidental answer of David, that it was not the expression of any passing mood, you may see from the fact that in another psalm David deliberately repeats it; for in the Twenty-fourth Psalm also he asks: 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall rest in his holy place? Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.' Mere morality, you will say, and even for the most part negative morality. Who is the

man who is not only to ascend the holy hill, but to dwell in it? who is not only to visit the tabernacle but to rest in it? David does not even say he was to be brave, magnanimous, self-sacrificing. He only says that he must not be a liar or a slanderer, or one who wrongs others, or takes reward against the innocent. And you may be tempted to say, Surely David puts the scale too low; this is a very pinched and poverty-stricken ideal, it is all mundane and commonplace. Surely the picture of the man who is true to God should present some features, some single point which a person aiming at a more refined and ecstatic spiritualism would at least have cared to introduce into the picture. Was it, then, that David had a less exalted conception than you and I have of the Divine Majesty? Had he a less overwhelming sense of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity? If you think in that way to get over the difficulty, you are mistaken. No nation ever had the feeling so intense as the Israelites of the greatness of Him whom no man hath ever seen nor can see; who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach. Nor had any son of Israel a more intense conception than David, whether in his despair or rapture, of what it meant to be in the presence of God. To be without God was with David to be cast down, to be in deep waters, to sink into deep mire where no ground is. To be with God was to have fulness of joy; to awaken up after His likeness was to be satisfied with it; to be shown the light of His countenance was more than all the treasures of corn and wine. If you think the terms low upon which these high blessings are to be realised, the explanation certainly is not that the blessing is thought to be a low one, or that any other can be set in competition with it. How is it, then, that David asks, as you think, so little as the condition of this priceless, this eternal boon? Is it so little? Is it so small a thing to keep innocency and do the thing which is right? If you keep innocency, are you so sure, all of you, that you do the thing which is right? Perhaps you fancy that David only speaks the language of the Old Testament. Well, then, let us go together to the New Testament. That New Testament speaks over and over again identically the same language, in almost every page of it lays down the invariable rule in scores of different forms, that if thou wouldest enter into life, Keep the commandments. When the multitudes came to Jesus in thousands to hear, many of them for the first time, from His lips of the Kingdom of God, were there no laws of that Kingdom? were there no rules to obey, no ideals to strive after? Did His preaching in the least resemble what priests and preachers have often substituted for it? Did He ever say a single word about the requirements of the Pharisee, or the things on which the priest insists? Did he ever say anything resembling remotely the language of the preachers who say, 'Do

nothing; simply say, "I am saved," and you will have no more trouble.' Read and judge for yourselves.

The great truth I am striving to bring home to you, David's truth, and the truth of Christ Himself, is, that those who desire to be one with God, that every one who nameth the name of Christ, must, as the first essential, depart from iniquity. You cannot escape from the perfectly plain, unmistakable words of David; still less can you escape from the perfectly plain, unmistakable words of your Saviour Christ. It is not this or that or the other, not this profession or this Shibboleth, or this following of one sect, or one party, or one church, which will save you; Christ said, 'Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.'

DEAN FARRAR.

Following Jesus.

Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee.
So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs.
And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me.' S. JOHN xxi. 3, 15, 19.

I. 'I GO a-fishing.' It was a mistake. Neither Simon Peter nor any of them had yet detected what the Resurrection had involved. To them it was as yet only the most amazing experience of their personal lives, only an event which might lift them into changed men and might pledge to them a new hope, but still as a mere event it must recede into the past; be left further and further behind; must become a mere memory. They might love to linger long around its blessed glories, they might wish with all their souls that the Easter sun should never set, that for ever and ever they might sit in the upper chamber and feel the breath of the Master on their brows, as He let fall upon them His peace; they might desire to cling for ever to the delightful talk which told how first one and then another learned the wonderful story, but desire it as they might it could never be. The hours, the days, the years must thrust themselves in and drive their joys far off; they were to be compelled to linger in exile with the Resurrection behind, they cannot return far in front of the interval they thought should have so little meaning. So far they had existed, yet there would be an interval to be filled up without any definite function or business; an interval to be filled up with anything that would bid the hours pass without harm.

What could they better do than take up present customs, the interests that are most naturally awakened; why not go a-fishing? And yet we know that the Resurrection was the beginning, not the end. It had opened the door of a new world, and that new world was one of active ministry, to which they were to yield all their powers. Their Master had not risen in order to depart, but in order to come again, to come again here upon this earth, to come again in fuller, richer activities than before. It was only now that He was to begin with all His powers, released by death and liberated in glory; only now that that seed of corn, which had languished during its brief life, pent up through the Death and Resurrection, would put itself out to purpose and bring forth much fruit; it was only now that He, once houseless and homeless on earth, who had not where to lay His head, was to enter in and take possession of a world which He had bought with the price of His own blood. It was for work that He had risen, to take living possession and occupation of the inheritance that He had gained. And the Resurrection was not the final climax, but rather the inauguration of the Kingdom, it was but the act by which He had come to take His great power and reign, and, therefore, to those friends of His it was to be no idle time of meditative wonder that had opened now upon them, no post to be occupied indifferently by any chance interests that had been theirs in the old days before they knew Him; nay, but the call 'Follow Me,' at which they had long ago left their boats and nets and everything, that call for ever being done and over, as they thought, now that He was passed out of it, was only just beginning. The time spent hitherto moving behind his feet from Galilee to Judæa was but a preparation, a test; and now, at last that He has risen, the preparation has passed and the reality opens. The old word, 'Follow Me,' was now first gaining its true meaning. Now the work presses, now men are wanted, let them be up and doing, let them lay aside for ever their boats and nets, let them come and follow Him. He is to be their life, to go before them day by day; His words will guide them, His eyes will be on them, His heart will instruct, and there will be so much work for them to do, so much anxious insistent precious work to fulfil for Him, they will have to feed His sheep and tend His lambs. And in view of these high ministries, therefore, Simon, son of Jonas, look well to thyself and make sure where thy strength lies, if thou wouldst be loyal, careful and patient and tender and persevering in shepherding the flock; look well into thy heart and answer, 'Lovest thou Me?' yea, I will ask it again, and yet again, until it weary thee: 'Lovest thou Me? lovest thou Me?' Yes, in that love lies the only security against the task now to be achieved. Only so could the Lord renew

the old blessed call which once began so well and yet ended in the denial; only so could He bid him turn to the hope of better things and follow Him.

II. 'Follow Me.' We Christians are so often impotent just because we hang, as it were, back in suspense between the Resurrection and the Ascension. We have perhaps, we say, struggled up through the swarming perplexities of critical doubt into the faith that Jesus Christ has risen indeed, and has appeared unto Simon. We have thought it all out; we have faced the evidence; we have read and re-read the old story; we have felt its pressure in its strong and strange conviction, we have recognised how deeply its reality is bound up with the existence of the Church and the inspiration of its creed; we have pondered over it until we have realised the force of the angel's challenge, 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.' Or again, we may have recognised this spiritual necessity as a fact; we may 'reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God'; we may have inwardly surrendered ourselves to the truth, and the over-mastering conviction may have passed over our souls, 'Christ is risen: we too shall rise in Him. It is real, it is true, and we will die in that hope.' All that may be ours, and yet though this is now a rational conviction of ours and also a spiritual faith, it may remain suspended and inoperative, with very little bearing upon the world about us, or make no obvious difference to the actual things amid which we pass our days. But there, by our bedside at night, or in a moment of pressure or anxiety, we have shut ourselves in alone with our faith and have found it to be our hope, our friend, and stay. There we lift our hearts to the unseen Lord, who is gone far away out of our sight; there we do indeed look earnestly forward to the day when by His mercy we may pass to do His business, when He will receive us into His house. But outside the door of our chamber, in amid the throng, when we have risen from our knees, this faith of ours all shrinks up. There seems to us no positive duty for it to fulfil, no charge committed to it, and in the thought of that the social life about us takes possession; its rules and habits and fashions and assumptions and expectations direct and govern all our deeds and words. Our faith slips off; it fails to interpret the matter-of-fact surroundings; we see only the world of men and things earthly, secular, customary, and temporal, controlled and manipulated by its own instinctive methods. Whether we believe, or whether we do not, is all very much the same to us; God only asks us to believe like other men, to do the proper thing, to keep the conventions. We have known this habitual life from childhood long before we were drawn to religion, and there it is all still, just as before, the same doings there and

meetings, the same intercourse, amusements, interests, and politics; the same succession of seasons, holidays, work, leisure, books, theatres, dinners, balls, and clubs. It is all one piece; a steady enduring fabric. Look at it: how natural it is, how familiar, how easy—just as of old—so ready always to accept us into its forces, to let us join its movements, and to pass in and out of its manifold occupations; we have but to step down into the stream and it is all begun again. And so it is that each of us says, in his own way, 'I go a-fishing.' We take up again the well-known social round, we play our *rôle*. It is not that this life we adopt need be wrong or false—it may be as innocent and natural a course as was Simon Peter's—but it is wrong that it is taken up as if the Resurrection of the Lord had no part or lot in it.

It is a decline therefore, a lapse from the level of our faith. That faith is bound to pass on from the Resurrection which it opens to the Ascension, in which it is fulfilled. By the Ascension our Lord rises and departs, only to take His great power and reign: He goes in order to come—to come here on this very earth, to walk up and down, to enter into it, to abide and sup, to occupy it for Himself, to establish Himself in possession, to build Himself a house, to sow His seed, to reap His harvest, to dig His wine-press, to gather His grapes; His whole life is now there, to assert His reality, to give satisfaction to the empty soul, to fill the hungry with good things, to create new responsibility for wealth, to illuminate and refresh those toiling millions who this day in London are crying out for their share in that leisure which you and I enjoy—that leisure without which no mental and spiritual growth is possible; He comes to be felt as a dominant energy, laying hold of this human society, reinvigorating it, and refashioning it in the likeness of that city Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all. First He roots His dominion in the Church separate and holy, that there He may secure Himself a fortress against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. That is primal and essential: He must first lay hold of the spiritual core of the man, and out from that eject the poison. Within the Church He sits like a king, a living, governing king, and out from that central home He seeks to spread His power abroad and push back hostilities and wrong. That is the loving work of Him who lives and reigns, and for this He needs us, at least He calls us, and for that call He provokes and kindles our affections towards Himself. For that need He is ever pressing home upon our hearts the old question, pressing it home again and yet again in spite of all our disloyalties and denials; pressing it home above all, when we sink back and decline in our task and idly finger once more the nets and boats that come so easy to us. 'Son of My

heart—child, lovest thou Me? If thou lovest Me, work for Me, do My business, spread My Kingdom, tend My lambs. Come, rise and follow Me.' Still He cries, 'Follow Me. In these things look to Me, watch for My guidance, pray for My direction, assume My supremacy, acknowledge My rights, and follow Me.' Ah, how blessed if every atom of our life here should be spent as a piece of personal service done for the Lord and Master, who is, through us, asserting the claims of His Ascension over the earth that He has won for His inheritance by His Resurrection from the dead! How blessed if it were by the living and present Lord, at whose beck and call we did our daily business, looking up into His eyes, listening for His voice! Could any life be more full of bliss than one which, whatever it did or said in all its common affairs, still moved in obedience to that ascended Master, who from day to day and from hour to hour would repeat, 'Follow thou Me!'

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

The Unfinished Tower.

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? etc. S. Luke xiv. 28-30.

I. OUR Lord, during His days on earth, had His eyes constantly fixed on that Kingdom of Heaven which was to be brought into existence at His death and Resurrection; and ever we know He spoke, in parable after parable to His disciples, of the type and plan and character of this kingdom that was to come, which He would, indeed, create and govern, but from out of which He would appear to be withdrawn, as a householder gone into a far country, as one gone out hence to receive a kingdom and to return, as a bridegroom for whose advent men waited. Such would be the kingdom at His Ascension, towards which His heart was set, that kingdom from out of which He would have departed, departed as a visible presence, while these His friends would have to administer and control it, as those intrusted with talents for an absent master, as servants administering a household while they watched for their lord's return. With care and with forethought and anxiety, our Lord spends Himself in anticipating this situation; He was ever making His preparations, securing His material, laying down His plans, foreseeing the needs; and ever as He went up and down the earth, He took note of what would be profitable in these days to come; He laid His finger on this and on that which would be required, and He called His disciples' attention to what would serve; He set before their eyes, in these vivid pictures, the manifold necessities that would press

upon them, and the various materials that would best suit their purpose, if they were ever to hold together that kingdom which was His body, the Church of God.

II. And, amid all these types and characters which, as He looked around, seemed to Him to be peculiarly serviceable, and even indispensable, we know that He singled out, with repeated emphasis, the character of the business man. True, such a type is open to peculiar moral peril. It has a tendency to adopt low aims, to run on a low level; cool, long-headed, practical, it is apt, taken by itself, to be without the spirit of vision. It sees too vividly the things close about its feet; it is tempted to be blind to any far-off ideal; and so it often misses the high causes, the heroic hopes that are abroad, all the flashes of inspiration, all the glimpses of enthusiasm, all the splendid ventures of faith. These are all too strange to it; it looks askance at them with distrust, and ignorance, and suspicion, and perhaps holds them in contempt. Its instinct is to drop down lower, to sink to a level where its own gifts will be more easily and appropriately assured. So it becomes hardened into a Philistine rejection of all the deeper motives, which are creating the future. Blind to the light, with which the Kingdom of Heaven is felt to be drawing near, blind to the shooting gleams of this new dawn, it may, if it does not take care, grow angry with those who see it, get cruel and brutal, trampling down what it cannot understand or adopt. And so our Lord had strong loathings and denunciations for this temper whenever it settles down to the mere accumulation of wealth, to the mere gratification of individual selfishness. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!' It is filled with terrible perils whenever this practical gift trusts to its own inspiration, takes itself as the final standard, becoming itself the spring of the moral life. Then the world attracts it with overwhelming force, for the world finds it just the work it enjoys, because it does it so well. The world proposes to it no vague, remote, difficult dream, but plain, practical objects, to be attained by shrewd common-sense. In such aims it finds its capacity put to use at once and with ready welcome, so apt it all is, so pat it all falls. And therefore it is that men of this temperament do but too readily fall into the world's service, and therefore our Lord warns, as we have heard Him.

And yet He could not but know how admirable was the service which these men gave the world. Is it not through its always securing men of this type that the world is so extraordinarily strong and effective? What skilful servants they make, these unjust stewards! —how intelligent they are, how quick to accept a situation, how rapid, how exact their measure of the best means in hand, how sure their grip on the immediate opportunity! Looking at them, our

Lord seems to say, 'They are in the world, unscrupulous perhaps, but what cleverness, what readiness, what foresight, what industry, what courage, what persistence, what versatility! No wonder that their own lord commends them, in spite of their injustice!' And ah! our Master, He grudges the world such servants, grudges it such splendid powers which it throws away on its own unworthy aims. These unjust stewards, these children of mammon are, He tells us, in their own way, in their own generation, wiser than the children of light.

III. The children of light—these are they who see visions, who dream dreams, they catch sight of that to which these others are blind; and they are true to what they have seen, loyal to their aim; pure of heart they see the end, they see God; simple, devoted, sacrificial, yes, the ground and root of character needed in the kingdom must always lie in the purity of vision, in the simplicity of love, in the converted heart. But, when this has been once secured, when the soul is turned in the right direction, when it has entered in within the door of the kingdom, then, for the work given it to do in the light of the vision that it has seen, for the building up of the kingdom, for its growth, for its development, for its advance—ah! then there are other characteristics which will be sorely wanted. Our Lord is thinking of the long-drawn interval, when He abides in the far country. He is thinking of the slow occupation of the earth by the Church, through the dragging years. Then it is that He will be needing the men of resource, the men of industry, the men of practical capacity. Oh, if He could win over to His own pure service the gifts and capacities of which the world has such abundance; if, for instance, He could but lay hold of the inner will of a man like the unjust steward, if He could purge and change his aims, how splendid a minister, how magnificent a weapon with which to push forward the frontiers of the kingdom! A man of such energy, of such strength of character, a man who will never be upset, never be surprised, never be caught napping, never lose heart, never be bewildered, never show himself a fool, a man who would take in everything at a glance and put all to immediate profit, anticipating every emergency, ready and alert and steady, masterful and wise—if all that endowment could be brought over to work for God, for His household the Church; if he could be as a banker at God's desk, with all his injustice, his looseness of principle burnt for ever out of him in loyal consecration, that would, indeed, be a prize. And, as He turns to review His own children of light, is it that He misses this particular gift in them? There is Peter with his hot energy of devotion, there is John with his brooding passion, there is Thomas with his melancholy affection, there is Simon the Canaanite with his wild

zeal—beautiful, faithful, radiant souls, the little flock, the children of His heart, moving there now under His eye in child-like loyalty.

Yes, now under His eye. But then the days are to come when other things will be asked of them; without His visible direction, they are to rule and govern and administer. Very long the work, and very wearisome the pressure, very slow the advance, and very dangerous the crisis, and very relentless the foes. Will they manage it? Will they endure? They have the simplicity of doves. Thanks be to God who hides His truth from the wise and prudent and reveals it unto babes! But, still, the wisdom of the serpent, that too will be needed, for only with prudence and skill and patience will they ever cope with the children of mammon. And so ever and ever He continues to press upon them this especial demand, the demand for the trained gift of business, as in the parable of the talents repeated; the demand for regularity, order, fertility, distribution, arrangement, in the parable of the householder; the demand for deliberate, long-sighted prudence, in the parable of the merchant seeking goodly pearls, or again in the parable of the wise virgins securing oil; the demand for shrewd and rapid tactical decision in time of trouble and crisis in the parable of the unjust steward. The wisdom of this generation—that is a real good to be diligently pressed into the service. Christ wants men of that type, and reversely He is emphatic in His repudiation of the opposite kind.

IV. The man He decidedly does not want is given in the parable of my text, a man who began to build and was not able to finish. There is the man He will not have at any price, the man who has no foresight, no industry, a man who cannot calculate, or anticipate means to an end, a man who cannot stick to a purpose, who makes a venture, and then lapses from its prosecution, a man of headlong impulse, inexpert, rash, undisciplined, unsteady, beaten at the length of the labour, yielding at the first pinch. On such a fiasco our Lord is startlingly severe. Better, He pronounces, not to have begun to build than to begin and fail to finish.

Why? That seems so hard. Surely the effort to begin is something to the good. Surely, to aim beyond one's power and to fail is the very task to which all men are called. Yes, and also our Lord forgives and accepts all broken efforts in His great compassion. There is no limit to His forgiveness of our folly. But, for all that, folly and recklessness are not in themselves virtues because they are put out on God's side. And, moreover, there is a serious responsibility incurred by all beginnings which He bids us take to heart. If an effort is made and then fails, it does not leave the situation where it found it; there is a recoil to be taken account of, which is charged with peril both to ourselves, and also and above all to the cause on

behalf of which it is made. We are ourselves worsened; the sense of defeat, the outbreak of ridicule, the misery of collapse, these tell against us now; and our nerve and our hope and our fibre are lowered and degraded and demoralised, we are thrown back frightened from the point from which we originally started, for a possible hope which was open to us once is now closed. We are hit, and it is worse still for the cause. It has fallen under a cloud through our mishap; it is discredited now, brought under suspicion, put to shame. The plan ever abides there as a by-word and a reproach, and its very failure is a signal at which fools will rally. It goes to confirm, to enhearten, and very possibly to vindicate and justify all their denunciations. 'Look,' they say, 'we told you so; there is no strength to fulfil what is promised. It is the memorial and evidence of a vain endeavour. We always said so, and it is clear now, the proof is before your eyes. These men began to build, and they were not able to finish it.' So it is that a bad start is so deadly in its effect. This is why an ineffectual protest against wrong leaves things worse than they were, for the evil that has stood and survived a shock is stronger than before, is rooted deeper; it has gained the confidence that comes to a winning side. Such is the failure of an unsuccessful rebellion: it has brought upon the cause demoralisation and the ignominy of defeat. So there is a terrible responsibility incurred in all beginnings that do not finish, made without calculation, without rational, cool, clear-headed resolution, without counting the cost, without anticipating the stress and securing the resources.

And it is for the honour of the cause, it is for the honour of the kingdom that our Lord would bar all such unbusinesslike disasters. And therefore He turns on the crowd bidding them beware: let them take care; there is a risk run in starting a Christian life; the work will be severe and long and laborious, the kingdom cannot afford a series of defeats, an exhibition of folly; there must be no reckless enthusiasm. These, if they lapse, do more than fail; they hurt and damage the kingdom and the cause. The cause is serious, let them remember, because it is not they themselves who are concerned, but God—God's cause, God's kingdom, God's tower they proposed to build, His name invoked on the building, His power challenged to sanction and ratify it. And then there it is, to stand unfinished; and nothing can be more forlorn as a witness against God, this unfinished tower built in His name, so melancholy, so contemptible; it stands on and on, a monument of disaster and disgrace, a record of uneffected purpose, of childish folly; it stands there to be a bye-word, and men point at it, and children ask what it means, and the answer is, 'God began to do something, and found He could not finish it.' That is the demoralising message that is spread abroad. It lowers

God's fame, throws Him into pitiful contrast with the children of this generation. *They* make no such dire blunders; *they* do better than that. 'If any of you mean to build a tower,' our Lord says 'do you not first sit down and count the cost, and see whether you have enough to finish it?' and, therefore, this failure falls upon God, and brings Him into this unwholesome contrast. It takes God's name in vain; it accuses God before men. It is harder now to believe in God than if no such tower had ever been begun.

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

Sunday after Ascension Day

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	1 S. PETER IV. 7-11.
GOSPEL	S. JOHN XV. 26. XVII. 4.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	DEUTERONOMY XXX.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	DEUTERONOMY XXXIV. OR JOSHUA I.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Vision is for an Appointed Time.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. HABAKKUK ii. 3.

WE are keeping the anniversary of a great waiting, the waiting of the ten days for the Holy Ghost. It was not long; but it was intense. How intense, it is difficult to measure.

Conceive the dearest friend you ever had, saying, just as he leaves you and goes to heaven, I will come back to you. Think what a waiting it would be for his return!

The period was indefinite. The disciples only knew that it was sure. The blank was tremendous; but the promise filled the blank, so filled it, that they passed it in great joy, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God.

Remember this, there will come times when it will be a comfort, there is always a promise to fill every blank.

If you have never considered it, you will be surprised to see what

a large space of the Church's history, and of every believer's experience, is occupied by waiting.

The whole of the Old Testament was a waiting for our dispensation. The whole of the New is waiting for another.

The Flood, the promised son to Abraham, the Exodus, the Law, the Holy Land, the return from captivity, the Messiah, the Holy Ghost, the destruction of Jerusalem, the restoration of the Jews, the second advent of our Lord, were all waited for.

David speaks of his waiting for God more than twenty-five times. Isaiah is full of the same thought. And every child of God could have much to tell of it.

The reason is evident. It exercises faith. It humbles the soul. It enhances the blessing. It glorifies God. Therefore God waits, and therefore we must tarry His leisure.

I will not stay now to consider what the vision was for which Habakkuk was told to wait. It would be interesting; but not suited to this place. It may be enough to say that it was the overthrow of Babylon. Habakkuk prophesied just before Cyrus; and the vision probably went on to the destruction of the Babylon of the New Testament; and to this it is likely that the direction about waiting chiefly pointed.

We will think of the vision with which we have now to do. And we understand by the word 'vision' something which we do not yet fully see, but which God will show us. And concerning all such things, which God has promised to reveal, you will notice that the time is fixed, though we do not know it: that, at the end, it will declare itself quite plainly, and that we shall not be disappointed. Therefore we must wait ever so long, with patient confidence that it will not exceed its own appointed limit, it will not lag; it will not tarry. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

It is a familiar thought to us all to wait for the advent of Jesus Christ. The whole Church stands always in the attitude of expectation for the return of her Lord. But very few think of waiting for the advent of the Spirit.

You will say, perhaps, 'The Holy Spirit is come. There is no advent to wait for.' But the Holy Spirit comes and goes. His advents are not one, but many. They are at distinct times, and in distinct manners, and with distinct differences, for distinct purposes. They are, in this respect, like those distinct manifestations of Christ in the forty days, which came at certain intervals; each isolated; and were probably intended in this to be the picture and the type of the visit of the Spirit to the Church in all ages.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY

The coming of the Spirit is the coming of Christ. What else could He mean when He said, 'I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you'? Therefore there are advents of the Holy Spirit; and they are advents to be looked and waited for.

Every one who has watched these things, and observed the workings of his own heart, will say that he has been conscious, again and again, of the coming of the Holy Spirit to his soul, on special occasions and for special work, to convert, to reprove, to teach, to comfort, to refresh. These comings are in very various degrees of power and light and influence. Observe S. Peter's remarkable expression: 'When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.'

And the Spirit, when He comes, is always a vision. He always shows something. He clears the eye. He makes something that was dark plain and visible to the mind; so that the words of Habakkuk have a literal application to the Holy Ghost. 'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.'

Like, then, the Apostles, and in accordance with the season of the Church, we all have our interval preceding Pentecostal gifts. And there are few lessons which it is more important for us to learn than this, to wait for the Holy Ghost.

Let me illustrate what I mean.

I will suppose that you are a real inquirer after truth, and that you study your Bible very carefully. Neither do you read it without prayer. You seek earnestly the influences of the Spirit, and you fully recognise the necessity of divine teaching.

But there is a doctrine, or a verse, which you cannot understand. It is an important one, and to many it seems to present no difficulty at all. But to you it is wrapped in darkness. You have brought the best powers of your mind to bear upon it; but still it is a perfect mystery.

Now what shall you do? Leave it: leave it for a little while. Have it generally in your mind, but do not think much about it. Do not be anxious about it. Lay it up in the high places of prayer, and determine that you will come back to it again another day more carefully. For your understanding of that matter depends upon the Holy Spirit; and, for some reason, the Holy Spirit does not see fit yet to give it you. Wait for the Holy Ghost. And some day you will return to that subject, and it will be as clear to you as if it were touched by a sunbeam.

And it is strange and beautiful how the Holy Spirit is pleased to light up passages of Scripture and truth just as and when He chooses.

All in order and degree, but each separately, and, as it seems to us, arbitrarily. What you have to do is to 'watch at wisdom's gates, waiting at the posts of her doors.' You are not allowed to see it yet; but you will presently. 'For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.'

Or, it may fall to you thus. You have long asked God for something which you know that it must be God's will to give to you, for it is distinctly promised. You have pressed it again and again with all the faith you can put into your petition. And it has never come. You cannot see a token that you are heard. Nevertheless you are certain that it is a promise. It is a spiritual thing. It is one of the covenanted promises.

Why, then, is there no answer? It is simply a matter of time. The set time is not yet come. And God is answering your prayer as Christ answered the Syro-Phœnician, by giving you patience to hold on, and exercising the patience that He has given. It will be here in its own day. It is coming quickly, though it is not quick to come. Therefore, though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Or, it may take this form. You have every reason to believe that you have sincerely repented of your sins. You have hated them; you have forsaken them; you have humbled yourself into the dust for them; you have brought them to Christ; you have confessed them; you have no other confidence about them, but in Jesus only; and you have not the shadow of a doubt of the love of His heart, and the efficacy of His Blood. And yet you have no peace, no assurance of forgiveness, no voice to tell you that you are pardoned; no sight of a Father's countenance.

And the time is growing very long. And you may soon die. And what and if you should die, and no seal of peace upon your soul?

You will not die without a seal of peace upon your soul! It is impossible! God cannot lie.

The fact is this. You are pardoned, but your pardon, for some adequate cause, is concealed from you. It is Christ's work to pardon. It is the Spirit's work to apply the pardon to the conscience. You have the one; but you have not the other.

Echoes are at different intervals. It is not every one to whom it comes, as it did to David, instant. 'I have sinned against the Lord!' The Lord hath put away thy sin. Even David, at other times, had to toss long nights upon his bed.

No one can tell what is going on within the veil. No one but God can tell what your character was, and what you can bear. The one thing that is positive is this, that it cannot fail, for the vision, that

sweet vision of the smile of God, and your own name written in the Lamb's Book of Life, 'the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.'

Many a worker for God has found the same thing: 'I have my work plainly given me. I hold my commission. And I am promised grace, and strength, and wisdom for my work. But I feel now I have no power; I have very little zeal, and almost no knowledge. I am not conscious of any gift whereby I can do what I have not the least doubt is assigned me to do.'

That was exactly the position of the disciples during the ten days. They had been sent out; but they were to wait, and not to stir, till they were assured of the necessary qualification of the power from on high.

Take the lesson. The power for duty follows duty. At what an interval we cannot say; but there is never a duty without a power for the duty.

You have the call. Be much in prayer and expectation for the gift, for the call.

The period between is not lost space; but do not go till you have good reason to believe that you have secured the necessary endowment. It will come; and you will know it. You may not see it now; but, as surely as the Apostles saw it, you shall see it.

Or, if it be that you have for some time been carrying on some work for God with no success, no mark of God's presence, no evidence that you are in your right place, or that it is your vocation to do that work, do not be hesitating too much. The latter rain often comes very late. Those who have done the greatest works for God upon the earth have been left waiting for a blessing to the very point of fainting and despair. Only go on. There is time for the work now; the time for results when God pleases.

And many a poor mourner has wondered whether that afterwards will ever come, when the chastening should yield its peaceable fruit. Will the chasm never fill? Will my heart never bend to His hand? Shall my sorrow never turn into joy? Shall I never see love in this?

One breath of the Spirit will do it. That will make all the difference. And already, by the token of what you feel, the affliction is working out its far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The water is at your feet, though you do not see it. The day is dark, but before evening it will be light. 'For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak'; speak its own sweet message, 'and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.'

But you ask, why does it tarry at all? I answer, partly sovereignty; partly your want of preparation; partly discipline; but all love.

It tarries behind your blind, hasty, impetuous rush; but it does not tarry behind God's calm, wise, pre-ordaining counsel.

The waiting time is all in the compact. Therefore, though it is slower than your rashness, 'wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not tarry' behind God's balancing mind.

And how shall we wait? Just as the Apostles did. In holy places and ancient ordinances; in unity among ourselves; loving and praying; with one accord; grasping the promises with submitted will, in the joy of confidence; knowing the God of our future, though the future of our God be hidden; in the simplicities of faith, and with loving views of Jesus.

No promised vision is very far off to those who wait like that.

It is one of the paradoxes of our faith. The time is determined in God's foreknowing mind, and the hour will strike right as it is set; nevertheless, our faith can put on the hands of the dial.

Therefore, wait with a still mind, for you wait for God; but wait with importunate prayer, for God waits for you.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Days of Expectation.

The end of all things is at hand. 1 S. Peter iv. 7.

I. 'THE end of all things, says St. Peter, is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.' It is very much to the same effect that our Lord Himself speaks in one of His last discourses: 'Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man.' And S. Peter's expression, be sober and watch, seems best explained by our Lord's words on the same occasion, 'Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged,' not merely by surfeiting and drunkenness, but 'by the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.' What can better express the feelings which they ought to have, who, after gazing on their Lord ascending into heaven, turn their eyes again down to earth, with the words of the angels in their ears, 'He shall so come as ye have seen Him go'? And so

it was with those disciples; they returned to Jerusalem and were continually in the Temple.

And above all things, adds S. Peter, have fervent charity among yourselves. In like manner S. Paul says, 'And above all these things put on charity.' This brotherly love is the great requisite in preparations for the Last Day; for without it watchfulness and prayer are of no avail, or rather cannot exist. It was so with the early Church warm with first love, and should be with that which is last in waiting.

For charity, it is added, shall cover the multitude of sins. This needs must be so; for true love—the love of God and man—being ever combined with humility, is ever confessing its sins; and if we confess our sins, God will forgive us our sins and cleanse us. 'Blessed is he whose sins are covered, and to whom the Lord imputeth not sin.' And our Lord has pointed out the way, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much.' Add to which, that love will also cover the sins of others, by forgetting and forgiving them, by seeing them not; and then the promise is, that the merciful shall obtain mercy, and he that judgeth not shall not be judged; and if we forgive others, God will forgive us our trespasses. So that the love which, as the Book of Proverbs says, covers the sins of others, shall cover also its own; and charity never seeks its own pardon more effectually of God than when it is seeking that of others. As S. James also says, 'He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.'

While the gospel for to-day assures us of what will be done, and what is done for us, the epistle exhorts us of what we are ourselves to do, as in preparation for the great harvest that is at hand; watching in prayer with all perseverance, as looking forward to the end of all things; that by charity all gifts of the Spirit may be regulated, and in charity all sins forgiven, that so all may redound to the praise of God.

II. The gospel for this Sunday, as likewise for all the Sundays at this season, is taken from our Lord's parting discourse in S. John's Gospel, on the coming of the Comforter, and on those sufferings and persecutions in the disciples of Christ, which may well make them to long for the consolations and support of their Heavenly Guide. 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.' This is a remarkable verse, from the great fulness of divine doctrine which it contains. Our Lord Himself, He here states, will send the Comforter after His ascent to heaven; and from the Father He will send Him; and,

again, that He proceedeth from the Father. These are very wonderful expressions of divine union. Add to this the very name of Comforter, or Advocate: how much is contained in it! how much that outweighs all the cares, all the opposition, all the sufferings of the world, to have One with us who is God, who is sent down especially for this purpose, to be the strength and refuge of those that believe in Christ! Nor is there less in that other name, 'the Spirit of Truth.' How do falsehoods and disguises, how do all the deceits of the world, and all the arts of him who is the father of lies, and the slanderous accusations of the wicked, nay, even the unrealities, and vanities, and fleeting shadows of the world, how do they seem to flee away at the very name, the Spirit of Truth, of Him who is God, equal to the Father and to the Son, God who hath come down in all the armour and power of God! Nor is this all; for the office of the Holy Ghost and the object of His coming are also expressed in this verse, 'He shall testify of Me.' He is called the faithful witness; as the faithful witness He shall come, and the object and end of His testimony is Christ.

I. WILLIAMS.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Double Testimony, upon which Faith in Christ Reposes.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning. S. JOHN xv. 26, 27.

I. SPIRITUAL energy was required by the Apostles, a spiritual endowment especially necessary for the hour of temptation. Therefore we may think how difficult it was to instruct the world about Christ, not this one or the other, but all people, great and small, poor and rich, high and low. Truly that was a difficult matter, which the fishers of Galilee could not possibly think easy, of which they were undoubtedly forced to say, We are not the men for such a work. Yet the Lord had given them the commission. Yes, they would have felt, if they were to be fit for this, they must be different from what they then were; a complete change must take place in them, which would make them quite different men.

But if, with this feeling, they asked themselves, How is this change to take place in us? what would they say? Perhaps this, We must be taught by ourselves and others, form something good out of ourselves, or seek out means or men who could instruct us in it. Ah, that would never have entered their mind. They wanted clearness before all things,—clearness of understanding as well as clearness of heart. Now the disciples themselves had trouble in finding Him aright, in the labyrinth of thoughts about Him, in the thousand kinds of ideas about Him, which were crossing each other within them. The entire greatness and difficulty of the task came more strongly before their eyes the more they became engaged in it with Him. Men especially, like S. Peter, who had come to know by experience how man can be led to a new and deeper insight, he saw that the first thing which he knew of Christ did not come to him by flesh and blood, nor by thoughtful reflection, but that God in heaven had revealed it unto him (S. Matt. xvi. 17); such an Apostle knew quite well that one must go this way in order to arrive at any clear discernment. And if it was really the question how to become different men, to attain purity of heart, strength of will, and the capacity for sacrifice, then these men knew well that flesh and blood could not help them, and that all the devices of the heart, and all the methods thought of to break off old evil habits, —that these attempts would not really lead them to the goal. Truly the distance between what they were in this respect and what they must become, if they were to fulfil their apostolic office, was so immeasurable that men of such simple minds as the disciples could not believe that they could learn it of themselves.

And where was the skill, the capacity for the apostolic calling to come to them from? Must not the clear sight of these men have told them that here the greatest intellectual skill, as far as it might be of a natural human kind, was quite out of proportion to the result which they had to produce; in a word, that here only powers of the supernatural world were sufficient, that only preparation with the divine power could grant the skill which was needed? The disciples were soon set right about it, so that they said to themselves: We must be different, but the change which has to be worked cannot be effected from below; the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ must come upon us, so that we see with all clearness who He was, and who He is, what He did that is of such glorious consequence to us all; this Spirit of the Lord must come to us from above, He must purify the heart, strengthen the will; He and He alone can give us the heart, the love, the will, without which the apostolic office cannot be fulfilled. He must arm us with powers of a divine and supernatural character. With these powers, and with them

only, we shall be able to conquer the world, and bring it to faith in Christ.'

II. It must therefore have been clear to them that they could be made able Apostles only by the testimony which the Spirit of God would bear in their hearts. But it is also clear that in another respect the Holy Spirit was indispensable to them, if they were to carry out their work; it did not merely depend for its efficacy on them, but also on the world. For they would never have been able to conquer the world if power apart from themselves had not assailed the world, and from within had furthered and brought to completion the work which they only began from without. We need only reflect on the difficulties which opposed the faith in the Gospel at that time, and still oppose it, in order to see this easily. The Apostles knew very well, what was opposed to this faith in all men, not merely the weak vision of the human understanding, but, more than anything, the power of sin in human hearts, from which the obscuring of the understanding proceeds. A heart that is so deeply entangled in sin as the human heart is by nature, will not allow itself to be won by proof.

And no human heart, only the Spirit of God, has this power to conquer sin in men, to reveal it to them, to melt them to tears for sin, and to kindle in them the desire for deliverance from it. The Spirit, who does not approach from without, but works from within, can do that, and He alone; and if the disciples had not been able to reckon upon His assistance in this respect, their work would have been carried out very badly. The Lord must therefore bear an inner witness of Himself in men's hearts; and if He promised that, then they could go cheerfully to the work. We know that he had long since promised this to them, and now emphatically promised it to them in our text. He said soon afterwards, on the same evening, that this Spirit would reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (S. John xvi. 8). And so it also proved, when this Spirit not only came to the Apostles, but went by their side as a fellow-labourer. Then repentance came, and by repentance that faith which makes men blessed. It was indeed impossible that faith in the Lord should be brought about without the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

III. When the gospel of Christ sounds in a human ear, and through that into the soul, and new dispositions and emotions arise, then the Spirit from above can utter His, 'Let there be a new life,' into the susceptible soul. And if He is to form this life, He again requires, as the indispensable instrument, the knowledge of Christ which is already existing; for it is the material from which He has to form and alone can form everything anew in us. The Holy Ghost

must find in us the image of Jesus Christ: even if it is not yet in living harmony standing before us in all its clearness, yet it must be there in its general outlines, for this is the only way in which the human consciousness can again find itself aright in the world with regard to His divine descent, to His calling and His hope, with regard to the relations of all the apparently confused movements in the world to Him who guides it according to His own purposes. It is that alone by which the wearied heart can again animate itself, from which it can again draw strength from the heights of heaven. If the Holy Spirit does not find the image of Christ in us, He cannot conjure it into us. His work is only to collect the single scattered features into a focus within our consciousness, that He may make clear the confused image of Christ in us, as the Lord Himself promises; and while He enlightens, He animates it at the same time, that as it lived in the Apostles so also it may live in us, and pour out its enlightening, purifying effects from hour to hour. Yes, the two testimonies in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ thus belong to each other, if the conversion of mankind is to be accomplished.

R. ROTHE.

Two Witnesses.

When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning. S. JOHN XV. 26, 27.

OUR Lord speaks here of two witnesses. 'The Spirit of Truth,' He says to His disciples, 'He shall testify' (or bear witness) 'of Me: and ye also shall bear witness.' Looking on into the future He speaks of the witness or testimony which is to be borne to Him by the Holy Spirit, and of the witness or testimony which is to be borne to Him by the disciples who had known Him and lived with Him. He puts the two witnesses together, and no one can read these words of His without thinking that He meant the disciples to understand that the two witnesses were to exist together, and that the existence of each was necessary for that work which was to be done in the future in the world for Him. The coming of the Comforter is brought before His disciples by our Lord more than once as something quite essential. His words show that the purposes for which He came into the world could not be effected, that the work He desired to see done among men could not be done without this coming of the Comforter; nothing could stand in the place of that coming; nothing could do what that Comforter was to do. But yet the coming of that Comforter was not to suspend the active work of men, it was not to suspend the use of their natural powers in the

performance of that work. Their usefulness for the work depended on considerations lying outside the special powers given by the Comforter. 'Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.' The disciples are to bear witness of Christ, and are to do so because of their having been with Him; that is, they are to bear witness because of the knowledge they have gained of Him through their daily intercourse with Him. Just as one man can bear witness about another with whom he has lived on terms of intimate friendship, which a stranger cannot, so those who knew our Lord so intimately as the disciples did could bear witness as none others could; and this witness was a necessity for the world. The bearing of such witness is the qualification which is set forth in the election of an apostle in the room of Judas Iscariot. 'Wherefore,' says S. Peter, 'of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His Resurrection.' So here in our Lord's words in my text, as He looks on to what was to be after He had been taken up into heaven, and His disciples had gone forth to gather in His Church, He speaks of the witness to be borne to Him; the witness, first, of the Holy Ghost; and, secondly, the witness of the Apostles—the witness of all that they had seen and heard and learnt through living with Him from the beginning of His ministry from the baptism of John to the day when He was to leave them and go to the Father.

The thoughts suggested by these words of our Lord are, I think, very suitable for our consideration to-day, for to-day we have before us the history of the special coming of the Comforter to the disciples of Christ according to His most true promise. There in that coming was the birthday of the Church of Christ. Christ had, indeed, already gathered together His disciples, and had taught them; He had formed the body before this day, but it was not until this day that He breathed into it the breath of life for its work in the world in the gift of the Holy Spirit. This day that Body, the Church of Christ, first lived that spiritual life and began to execute its mission, witnessing to the world of Christ, drawing men to Him, bringing them to repentance, then admitting them into covenant with Him. We see in the history of this great Day of Pentecost the first action of the Church as a Body. It is true that as we look at the records to see what the disciples did, the main thing that claims our attention is the great speech by S. Peter. But S. Peter comes forward, not for himself alone, but as the mouthpiece of the disciples. He is not speaking for himself only; he is the leader of a band of men, and he speaks and acts as a leader. Behind him, and with him, are

these others. So, then, in S. Peter's action we see the action of a body of men; it is the action of a body of men with a common cause and a common purpose—the action of a body of men bearing witness to the world.

I. Now, let us turn again to the event of to-day, and what do we see? First, we see the action of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes on the disciples, and He declares His presence in them and with them by the manifestation of new powers with which they are endued. Devout men from every nation under heaven are amazed as they hear these Galileans speak to them in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. It is something very wonderful which is being done before them, and they ask one another, 'What meaneth this?' So the Holy Ghost witnessed to these devout men; He declared to them that the hand of God was upon these Galileans and His power in them. And so, in fact, the Holy Ghost bore witness of Christ, for these men who spoke were disciples of Jesus; that was evidently the condition of their being thus endued with power. This power, I mean, came upon these particular men, and did not travel on beyond them to others; it came just where Jesus was honoured as Lord and Christ, just there and no further. So the Holy Ghost bore witness of Christ on the Day of Pentecost; He bore witness to the world in the gift of power to that particular body of men.

II. But this is not by any means the only way in which our Lord's promise in my text was fulfilled. Let us think of what we see further in the events of the Day of Pentecost. Besides this manifestation of the action of the Holy Spirit we have the action of the Apostles. S. Peter stood up with the eleven, and spoke in their name to the assembled crowd. He spoke of what? He spoke of Jesus, of His death and Resurrection. 'This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.' Here is the fulfilment of the other part of our Lord's declaration in the text—'and ye also shall bear witness.' S. Peter appeals to certain facts and to a knowledge of those facts which he and his brother Apostles had, and which was independent of what had just happened to them on that morning, and the power with which they had been endued. Here is the witness of men, the common testimony of ordinary history.

But, then, see how Peter deals with these facts—how he uses them. He shows now what none of the Apostles had shown before, a true perception of how the Scriptures spoke of Christ. He saw things in the Scriptures which he had not seen before; he saw how the things which he read in those Scriptures fitted themselves exactly to the events which had been taking place before his eyes. He now saw Jesus Christ in the Old Testament as he had not seen Him before. And how was this? Where is the secret of this sudden gift of

sight? Was it not in this, that now the Holy Spirit, who spoke of old by the prophets was in him enabling him to see the meaning of what the prophets had said? The Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, when He came to the disciples, testified to them of the truth of God which was contained in the Scriptures, and so testified of Christ. Here, then, we have the Holy Spirit witnessing to the world through the Church. And we must at once notice this, that He witnesses through the mouth of individuals; He witnesses to the hearts and minds of those individuals, and so enables them to speak. In our Lord's words in my text, the witness of the Holy Spirit is put before the witness of the Apostles, and it is because that witness of the Holy Spirit lies at the root of the other witness. The witness of facts must indeed be borne to the ignorant before they know and believe, before they can appreciate the witness. He who declares the witness of facts must himself be taught by the Holy Spirit the significance of that witness before he can rightly declare it.

III. And so we see there is something further to be noticed. What was the result of S. Peter's address to the people? It was very striking. Men were not only astonished by what they saw and heard, they were touched by what he said, and were convinced by it; 'They were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' 'And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.' This was the result of the witness which S. Peter and the Apostles bore of Christ on that occasion, and a very striking result it was. But when we turn again to that which produced such a result, it was very simple, it was a statement of certain facts. Some facts were well known. S. Peter appeals to the knowledge people had of the miracles Christ had done, and the cruel and shameful death He had died. He then insisted upon the fact of the Resurrection. That was the great fact to which the Apostles witnessed, which lay outside the knowledge of the multitude whom S. Peter addressed. But with this statement of facts there was this in S. Peter's speech, there was an assertion of God's approval of Jesus of Nazareth, and of the fulfilment in Him of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, and this gives the force of the appeal, in a great contrast which is set up—a contrast between God's treatment and their treatment of Jesus of Nazareth—for in this contrast is an appeal to something within them, an appeal to a sense of righteousness, of justice and truth. Then here comes in the working of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Holy Spirit which makes righteousness and justice and truth great realities to the consciences of men.

The words of my text belong to all time; they belong to us. God deals with men now—He deals with us through this twofold witness.

There is the witness borne by Him, the historic witness of the truth; there is the witness borne by the Holy Spirit to the truth. Religion is not a matter of ordinary knowledge alone, it does not appeal only to the reason and the judgment. On the other hand it is not simply an assurance within which can dispense with reason and judgment. 'I speak as unto wise men,' says S. Paul, 'judge ye what I say.' That is the spirit in which appeals are made by Christ Himself, and all who speak for Him and in His name in the Bible. Yet to know Christ is not a matter for the reason and understanding only. To know Christ is not the same thing in kind as the ordinary knowledge of men which we have. The facts of His life are put before us in the gospels. There in that history we can know Jesus Christ, in a way, if we read it as we read any history; but what is such knowledge compared with that higher knowledge based upon those facts formed by them, absolutely unattainable without them, which is borne in upon our souls by a power which touches our conscience and our hearts, and shows us truth in a beauty, a power, a constraining force such as nothing earthly ever does?

The life of Jesus can indeed touch men, as the history of goodness, unselfishness, meekness, courage, high sense of duty, unworldliness, must touch men; and the sorrows of Jesus can move the heart of any attentive reader of the gospel, and perhaps bring tears of compassion to his eyes. But would you know what that life can be, and what those sorrows can be to men; ask if you have never known it yourself—ask one who has had to rouse himself to meet some duty, and to call up strength to face some act of self-effacement or self-sacrifice, what the life of Christ has been to him as he contemplated it on his knees, and prayed for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; ask one who is bowed down with grief what the vision of the suffering Saviour has been to him through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, how a sense of the love, the tenderness, the resignation, the courage, the hopefulness which he has seen in Him has come into his heart, into his whole being, with such living power as to make the Man of Sorrows the true Consoler and Comforter of all who mourn; ask the penitent sinner what he has seen in Jesus of the Cross: a voice has come to him, 'God so loved the world and therefore loves thee'—a voice from the Cross full of hope, and then bringing an earthly peace; ask the mourner what has shot a ray of unutterable brightness through the deep blue that enwrapped him as he heard the words, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' It is something more than human reasoning; it is something very deep, very real, very true; it is the mystery of 'the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father,' testifying of the Son, according to His most true promise.

BISHOP FESTING.

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Great Choice.

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life. DEUT. xxx. 19, 20.

THERE are two ways of interpreting this place: the first literally, by the way of the law; the second spiritually or evangelically, by the way of the gospel. The way of the law is that they should set themselves to work to obey the Ten Commandments: that they should have no other gods but God, that they should worship no idols, that they should keep the Sabbath, honour their parents, commit no murder, no adultery, no theft, and so on. Now this was all they could do till a better way—the way of a higher life—was revealed; but when Christ came this better way, this higher life was revealed in Him. He said: 'Believe in Me that ye may live—come unto Me that ye may have life, accept Me as your Saviour, and I will give you eternal life both here and hereafter. When you do this you shall keep the law as it was never kept before, for I will make a new covenant with you, which covenant shall be, that I will put My law in your hearts and write it in your minds, so that I and those who represent Me set before you life and death. And when you thus come to Me, receive My Sacraments, which are not mere acts of obedience, but means of grace, in one of which you are grafted into Me, the living Vine, and in the other you receive Me as the Bread of heaven, ye receive My Body and Blood, and have My life in you. Then you shall keep the law of My Father, not outwardly, but inwardly. In your inmost soul you shall be poor in spirit, you shall be meek, you shall not only do outward righteousness, but you shall thirst after it; you shall be pure in heart, you shall have the peace of God Himself reigning in you, you shall even rejoice in persecutions, afflictions, distresses, because you shall discern in these the tokens of the love of your heavenly Father. And if you continue in this mind you shall subdue the world to Me. Your light shall so shine in a dark world that men shall see in it the very light of heaven.'

M. F. SADLER.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY

V. OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Peace at the Last.

Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right: for that shall bring a man peace at the last. PSALM xxxvii. 38 (*P.B.V.*).

ND David, when he wrote the words, knew full well what he was writing about, and was well qualified to speak.

His days were in 'the sere and yellow leaf'; the closing days of a life which had been full of vicissitudes, rich in experience, the life of a man whose sin had been deadly, whose repentance sincere. He was one who had received at the hand of his God not a few blessings; and who had seen, as people are accustomed to express it, his 'share of troubles.'

Such a man, speaking in the evening of life, holds up the life of innocence, guilelessness, purity, as the only life worth coveting, because it is the only one that can bring a man a blessing that is unspeakable, and that in the hour in which he needs it most of all—'*peace at the last*!' 'Keep innocency!'

But let us see what it was that led David to write these words.

I. Life—its puzzles, its difficulties, its anomalies—all these things were exercising the minds of men one thousand years before the Birth of Christ, even as these same things continue to exercise men's minds now, nearly two thousand years after.

The tide of life, as it rolled on in Jerusalem of old, the busy capital over which David ruled, presented aspects in many points exactly similar to what may be seen in any modern city to-day. Men and women were absorbed in their special pursuits and occupations, engrossed by many cares and anxieties, just as men and women are in these practical nineteenth century days.

And there, too, appeared that great puzzle which, I suppose, will continue to exercise men while the world shall last, David's theme in this Thirty-seventh Psalm, the prosperity of the wicked, the troubles of the righteous.

And then, too, crept into men's minds that subtle temptation, born of impatience, if this be so, then why not use the remedy which we find ready to our hands? Why not meet wickedness with wickedness? Why not oppose violence to wrong? Why not face sin with iniquity?

To this David answers, 'I have been young, and now am old.'

Yes, it is when the sun is setting, when life's day is closing in, when the end is near, that the soul's vision is clearest and truest. Then earth-born mists lift and clear away. The world's false gilt and glitter vanish. A man sees that things are not always what they seem. He sees at last that we need never envy the prosperity of the wicked. Lives scandalous in themselves never can be really happy lives, even in the present, and the great test is yet to come. For good and for bad alike, the end must come. Viewed by the light which, from another world, is shed upon that end, many startling facts are revealed. The life of earthly wickedness and prosperity is seen, scorched and shrivelling up, and only 'a horror of great darkness' remains; while all the roughness, all the sharp edges of the other life are softened, mellowed, purified, and made bright as gold in the fire, and peaceful is the close of a life well-spent.

Therefore, 'keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right: for that shall bring a man peace at the last.'

II. It was the experience of a man full of days, long years ago. It is surely the experience of many an aged pilgrim now. What man or woman is there around whom the shadows are lengthening, the sun of whose life is hastening to its rest, who will not echo the Psalmist's words, and allow that their own experience proves their truth?

J. B. C. MURPHY.

The Continual Presence of Christ.

Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
S. MATTHEW xxviii. 20.

I. HOW paradoxical it seems, 'Lo, I am with you alway,' when He was just about to depart. But surely this was just what our Lord had been teaching them, to trust in His continual presence, even though unseen. So we find that most of our Lord's recorded appearances during the forty days were to those in some difficulty or trouble. He appears to S. Mary Magdalene in her sorrow, to S. Peter in his penitence, to the two disciples in their doubt, to S. Thomas in his unbelief, to the fishermen in their work; thus teaching that He is always with them, and ready to help in every time of need, and when they have learned the lesson, He says, 'Lo, I am with you alway,' and the cloud receives Him out of their sight.

II. That they had learned the lesson we see by their actions after Pentecost; they no longer craved for His natural presence; they found His spiritual presence all they needed. Yes, for the opera-

tion of the Holy Ghost brought Christ to them in a far more intimate and efficient union. Before, they listened to His words and followed Him from place to place, now, through incorporation into His Body, they have Him in Sacramental union, in a oneness so real that they are identified with Him, and are able to do all things through Him (Phil. iv. 12).

III. So with us, who are still keeping the Festival of the Ascension, no thought can be more helpful, no doctrine more practical, than that of our Lord's abiding, though unseen, presence in His Church, ay, and in the soul of each individual Christian.

It is a striking coincidence, if nothing more, that S. Matthew's Gospel begins with the prophecy of Isaiah, 'They shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us' (S. Matt. i. 23), and ends with the promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway.' S. Matthew is the Evangelist of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the essence of that kingdom is Christ's presence.

Let us strive to realise more earnestly Christ's last promise, and to seek His help in all our needs.

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

The Apostles after the Ascension.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. S. JOHN xiv. 18.

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew of these two the one whom Thou hast chosen. ACTS i. 24.

OF these two passages, which I have ventured to place side by side, the first has an appropriateness of its own to this, 'the Orphan Sunday,' in the Christian year. The second carries us back to the early twilight of the Christian dawn, to the period, which it is so difficult for us now even to conceive, when the expression 'Christian' had not as yet been heard, and the society which afterwards bore it had not emerged from Judaism.

I. The Ascension of our Lord, which we have so recently commemorated, was over. Calmly and quietly, as though it was but the natural conclusion of His life on earth, He had gone up where He was before, to His Father's throne. After His Resurrection He had been pleased to tarry forty days upon the earth. Nine days were now permitted to elapse after the Ascension before the bestowal of the Holy Ghost. During this solemn pause it is a permissible and an inspiring thought that He was passing through the realms occupied by successive orders of high intelligence, taking to Himself the glory of 'every name that is named,' and receiving the adoration

Notice, again, that some at least of the sins and duties thought of seem to be selected, not so much for their eternal significance as for their significance to the writer and at the moment—vices or duties of the day, of his race, of the special stage in human progress. Let me make this last point clear by an instance. I daresay there is one verse which has raised a question in some of your minds, especially in the place where it comes—almost in a climax before the final words of divine approval: 'He that hath not given his money upon usury, nor taken reward against the innocent.' 'Whoso doeth these things, shall never fall.' We have to remember that the Psalmist is thinking of two vices denounced all through the Bible, which means that they were perpetually recurring, deeply engrained in the character of the people, standing dangers to the national life. They were both instruments of oppression: one was usurious money-lending, the other was bribery, bribery in courts of justice.

When we are sketching an ideal for ourselves, we must not forget, nay, we must most anxiously remember, the special temptations of our age and time. If we do not remember them, we shall draw an ideal that will do us no good, but will help to drift us further from truth and reality. Rise high in your aspirations, 'Whatsoever things are true; whatsoever things are lovely,' but keep a place in your memory for the homeliest duties, the coarsest and simplest temptations. The divine life to you is first the life that avoids those daily besetting sins. It sounds, doubtless, at first hearing, something of a bathos—a fall—from the 'holy hill,' 'the tabernacle of God,' to greed of money, cruelty, bribery; but it is the way of the Bible always. It is just as S. Paul passes from his divinest ideals, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above,' to his plainest and most human warnings, 'Put off all these, anger, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your mouth.' The temptations of your age, the temptations of the moment, whatever they are, the saintly life, the noble life, must begin by escaping from these. It is not the whole of goodness, but it is its necessary condition and commencement. Be not weary when we preach to you that you must be honest, honest in word, honest in work, that you must be industrious, that you must keep a guard on your lips, that you must shun filthy words and filthy thoughts as the chiefest snare of the devil. It is as the Bible would preach to you from one end to the other.

II. 'Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle? or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill?' Who is he that shall stand in God's house on earth, a welcome guest, a son feeling at home in his Father's house? Who is he that shall dwell in His tabernacle, 'in the secret place of his dwelling,' beholding 'the fair beauty of the Lord,' in the eternal world beyond these shows? Do we ask the question for ourselves?

The eternal answer comes back in the Psalmist's words,—the pure, the just, the humble, the high-minded—'He that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing which is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart.' 'He that setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes.' 'He that sweareth unto his neighbour, and disappointeth him not, though it was to his own hindrance'; yes, and 'He that hath not given his money upon usury, nor taken reward against the innocent,'—he who in his own station and time has kept his soul clean from fashionable vices, from the temptations which might most easily stain it.

'He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.' He is trying to walk in his Saviour's steps, to imitate as he may the pattern set before him; and, so trying and so trusting, he will be found in his Saviour. The everlasting doors will be lifted up for the King of Glory, and with Him will pass into God's Holy Place those who in Him have found strength and peace and righteousness. DEAN WICKHAM.

Requisites of Effectual Prayer.

If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. S. JOHN xv. 7.

I. THIS short lesson of the Epistle for to-day from S. James is to teach us what will render our religion substantial and our prayers effectual. 'Ye are My friends,' says our Lord, 'if ye do whatsoever I command you.' This friendship with God, as our Lord is pleased to express it, this having His ears open unto our prayers, depends on this life of active charity and purity of heart. As S. John also says, 'Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments.' This is especially to be noticed on this Sunday, because it is Rogation Sunday, the Sunday of prayer and supplication, the season in which we wait for the coming of the Comforter; the pledge and promise of whose coming is attached to this obedience. 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.'

II. And now we come to what our Blessed Lord Himself says to us, in that His last discourse on the subject of prayer. This lesson from the Altar is like the voice of God speaking to us from His mercy-seat between the cherubim, the words of Christ in His own gospels. And these His last words at parting come before us on this Sunday with a new and peculiar interest, as we are filling up the

season of the forty days, when our Lord was with His disciples on earth after the Resurrection, and was now again about to leave them and to ascend to the Father. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' In our own name we can ask for nothing of God; after all our doings and deservings we have no plea to make; it is only as penitent sinners at best that we can venture to look up and ask for anything, and then only in the name of Christ. In His 'name,' that is, in Him as He is, the Son of the Most High, the everlasting God. 'In the name of Christ,' says S. Augustine, 'is signified the right opinion concerning Him'; and 'whatsoever ye shall ask,' he explains to mean, 'everything that is not contrary to everlasting salvation.' Ye shall receive it—it is not said when ye shall receive it, for the answer may be for a time delayed—but ye shall receive at the time most convenient for you. And surely with such a promise we ought to ask for the best of all things, even this fulness of joy, which is the Comforter Himself, having our hearts and desires there, 'where true joys are to be found.'

The one practical lesson of this Sunday is prayer; that we ask in the name of Christ, with all that earnestness and humility which becomes those who would not take that saving name in vain; that in order that we may pray effectually we abide in Him, and His words by obedience abide in us; that, as S. James says, we be 'not hearers only, but doers of the Word,' in order that we may worship God with pure and undefiled worship, lifting up pure hands in faith without wavering.

So may we, in the words of the collect, not only 'by His holy inspiration think those things that be good,' but also, 'by His merciful guiding, perform the same.'

I. WILLIAMS.

Thoughts for Ascensiontide.

He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.
S. Mark xvi. 19.

WITH the exception perhaps of the commemoration of our Lord's Resurrection, this is the earliest festival of the entire Christian cycle. S. Augustine seems to say that it was instituted as early as A.D. 68, and homilies upon it are found in the works of S. Athanasius and S. Chrysostom.

Ascension Day completes the yearly celebration of the Incarnation of Christ, and is as marked a feature of it as the Nativity which is

kept at Christmas. It draws the dividing line between the two aspects of the redeeming work of Jesus: that for the past, which is atonement, that for the future, which is intercession. The Ascension of Jesus presupposes and implies every part of His life on earth. Without the Incarnation could not have been the Atonement, nor without the Atonement the Resurrection, nor, again, without the Resurrection, this glad and glorious Ascension into heaven. Thus our Lord's triumphal Ascension, rightly understood, tells the story of His descent into flesh, and the purpose of that descent, and the accomplishment of that purpose: just as victory implies the conflict, and the arrival the journey.

I. The Ascension of Christ is the proof and seal of His redeeming work (S. Mark xvi. 19).

For if, when crucified and buried, He had remained in the tomb, then we had had shame: but now He who was crucified on this Golgotha hath from the Mount of Olives on the East ascended into heaven: for having hence descended into hell, and come back again to us, from us did He ascend again into heaven, His Father addressing Him, and saying, 'Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.'

II. What is meant by our Lord sitting at the right hand of God?

Why then, before He ascended into heaven, was He not said to sit at the right hand of God, since His human nature was already joined to the divine nature: and the divine had glory equal with the Father? In the first place, because with Christ's ascent, His human nature had not yet been glorified. Then, because Christ Himself as God, had majesty equal to the Father, yet He did not outwardly display it: [as it is said] 'I am a worm, and no man,' (Ps. xxii. 6) 'bearing the form of a servant' (Philip. ii. 7) still labouring, still bearing, still contending; and He sits not down while He is still in combat. 'It becomes an emperor to die standing,' as it was said by one.

He sits down after the fight; He sits down after the victory; He sits who is triumphing; He sits who reigns. It is not to be overlooked, as Irenæus has observed, that S. Mark spoke of the session of Christ at the right hand of the Father, which had been passed over by the other Evangelists, that He might show that prophecy of David to have been fulfilled in Him, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou upon My right hand.'

S. J. EALES.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Rogation Days.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. Eph. vi. 18.

THERE are other conditions of acceptable prayer which at this season of supplication we should remind ourselves of.

One of these is abiding in Christ. 'If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you' (S. John xv. 7). Here we are taught that Christ abides in us by His words. If we treasure up His words in our heart—ponder over them, and pray that they may be fulfilled in us, then Christ's words abide in us.

A second is the counterpart of this. It is well expressed in the words of the Psalmist, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' David did once regard iniquity in his heart, and his punishment was severe and lifelong. But God delivered him, and so he could say, 'God hath heard me.'

A third is forgiving, as we desire to be forgiven. This is incorporated in the Lord's Prayer, and the one only petition in the Lord's Prayer to which our Lord calls attention is this respecting forgiveness. He does this in the Sermon on the Mount (S. Matt. vi.), and He very solemnly reiterates it in a much later discourse. 'And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any, that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses' (S. Mark xi. 25).

And a fourth is a believing that we shall receive what we ask for. 'Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them' (S. Mark xi. 24).

Now this seems very difficult, because we cannot help considering, Is such a thing, which we earnestly ask for, according to the will of God? which must be secret to us. Putting aside this and other objections, we must consider how are we to attain this great gift of the prayer of faith. Evidently by setting before ourselves the promises of God that He will hear and answer prayer. If we dwell upon these, faith in a God who hears all prayer will rise within us, and we shall join others with us in our petitions according to the promise: 'If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven' (S. Matt. xviii. 19).

M. F. SADLER.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY

Christ in the Written Record.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name. S. JOHN xx. 30, 31.

I. 'MANY other things which Jesus did.' What is our first thought at being told this? Is it not this, 'Oh! if we could only but know them; if only they had been written down, what a priceless boon; they would be just what we most need, they would clear up so many points that are now tangled in dispute'? For, indeed, the recorded doings and sayings of the Lord are so pitifully, so terribly, short—just a few rapid incidents thrown together by the Synoptics, mainly out of the very last year of His life—only twenty days of all His earthly career touched upon in S. John! How scanty, how partial, how unsatisfying! Was ever so tremendous a venture as the Christian creed made on so slight a foundation as this! And just think how far every single little word or deed of our Lord goes, how much it carries with it. That you know is His profound characteristic that everything He does is charged with significance, so that sermons, meditations, commentaries, all find inexhaustible material in the least phrase He uses in His passing acts. And rightly, for somehow or other they tell, they hit, they speak home, they are alway fresh, alive, and fertile. Every text in the recorded gospels holds in it the story of countless souls who have fed on it and have found their hope in it. No word of the Lord returns to Him empty: all of them go abroad in the world to work, to convert, to sustain, to quicken. Centuries have passed over them, and still they wear their eternal youth. 'Would not the Christian Church,' we ask, 'have been spared many of its dismal blunders if it had more of the authoritative and undoubted commandments of Christ to keep it straight, to direct its feet, to enhearten its faith?' Surely if there is one thing about which we can be positively sure, it would be this, that the more we knew about the Lord Jesus Christ the better it would be. If there are many things that could be told us about Him, in God's name let them be written down at once and for ever. So any one of us would probably argue and conclude.

II. And yet S. John's deliberate verdict, at the end of his life, is given against that conclusion. He is speaking, as it would seem, to those about him, who felt just what we feel to-day. They are pressing him to tell them everything. He has come already to the close of what he has purposed to say, he is ending his gospel with the

twentieth chapter, at the confession of Thomas, that confession in which the Apostolic faith consummated its victory over doubt and fear. Now the whole body has learned to rise above everything that could make it hesitate or despair, it has given out the crowning cry of belief, 'My Lord and my God.' And with this the Apostle would stop—would be content.

Somehow, then, we are not on the track of S. John's mind when we begin by craving for an indefinite accumulation of gospel material. He does not consider that that is what we need. He has another purpose in view, as he writes, than that of recording everything that he could recall or discover about our Lord, and this purpose of his is better served by a selection than by an accumulation, and therefore he spends his energy and experience not in gathering, but in sifting. His effort lies in singling out from the swarm of memories those special and typical moments which will best convey the impression he desires. How different from such a man as Papias in the later days, he who had never seen the Lord, but would go about all over the world asking everywhere for some one who could tell him some new story about the Lord. That is not the Apostle, his long tarrying has taught him through the selective working of the Holy Spirit, under the pressure of daily circumstances what to keep in store, what to drop and prune, if the image of Christ is to transmit itself with faithful emphasis to those who are to come after. To secure this he depends, not on the quantity, but on the quality, of the matter chosen. We know how, even in his own case, the years as they pass over him have taught him the same lesson, to pare down rather than to expand. Fewer and fewer words, we are told by S. John, have become necessary to him; he would rather repeat and repeat those familiar phrases, into which he has concentrated all his love, than search about for other and more varied expressions.

III. What is wanted in the written record? Not to meet every perplexity beforehand, not to explain all the expressions used, not to be a complete statement of all that Christ has to say and do. No; He will Himself be with us to guide and explain; He will have much to say hereafter that we cannot bear now. He will Himself be for ever completing what He has begun. He will Himself guide us through our perplexities. There must be nothing in the record that will tend to take the place of the living Lord, nothing that will seem sufficient of itself without Him. The one thing wanted is knowledge of Him who is our invisible friend, knowledge of Him, not merely of what He said or did, but of Him, Him as a personality, a character. It was His character that He revealed through His incarnate acts; His eternal character made known in a visible shape, through definite and intelligible acts of will. We must, by help of

the gospel, know him as a living Being, as a breathing human friend who can be spoken to, delighted in as man, and loved and adored as God.

Now, in saying that, we have cleared up the reason for S. John's decision—for a character, as we all are aware, is understood, is revealed, through the quality rather than the quantity of its acts. To get at the heart and the mind of a person we turn to the characteristic deeds and words which come from him at the most cardinal and critical moments of his life. We can afford to omit, forget, a thousand details, if only we can single out and fasten upon those peculiar, those unique, expressions which have upon them the special stamp of his individuality. It is the typical facts that we require when the fullest secret of His being emerged and flashed. To know Him, then, at such vivid moments, is to know Him for ever, for it is to know Him as He is.

They tell, these gospels, chiefly of the judgment and the death; and besides that main event they only aim at giving samples of His characteristic acts, and of His most pregnant and germinal sayings: not a code of laws, not a system of dogma, not a complete ethical handbook, not a body of organised teaching; but germinal sayings—the sayings which start you thinking, which arrest you, which turn you round, which give you a direction, which put out an influence upon you, which draw you after them, which are felt as a pressure and a weight, which catch hold, and haunt and follow and dog you down; those sayings which creep inside your surface existence, which dig down and burrow and upset and disturb, which pierce and divide asunder to the very joint and marrow. These are the words which carry the personality—the individuality—with them. They come upon you as if with the force of a living presence, standing close by you, and speaking with a voice that compels attention. Many things they leave unanswered; many problems these words will stir rather than compose. The settling of these will come afterwards through the life in the Lord, through the Eternal Spirit; or, indeed, they may remain dark for many years. But for the present all that is needed is the touch of person by person, of soul by soul, of will by will. That is life, that is religion, that is Christian faith, that is the Catholic creed. The gospels have this one aim, to enable us to know Him, whom it is in whom we are asked to believe, 'to know Him whom we have believed,' to know God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. These things are written that we may know. That is the whole business.

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Inner and the Outer World.

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard. COLOSSIANS i. 23.

BROADLY and popularly speaking, there are two worlds, that for each one of us seemed to stand over against one another, the world outside us, as we call it, which we find ourselves observing as spectators, noting and examining, and learning, of which we ourselves seem only an accidental part, and the world inside us, which we feel as our own, which we know all about, which we in some measure create for ourselves, and from which we are inseparable.

I. Now, which of these two worlds is to be our mainstay and pivot? On occasions when the two appear to clash, which of them is it that you and I mean to stand by? Which of the two shall we make our starting-point for interpreting the other? Of which of the two have we the surest knowledge? One or the other must be the measure by which the other must be tested, the reality to which the other must at a pinch yield. One must certainly be above and the other below; but which? That is the question that men have to face. And on the one side are ranged all that sweeping weight of forces which are making for the secularisation of human life. They demand this secularisation just because they have made up their minds that the world outside is the true starting-point and the real determinant.

But we who profess to believe in God, and in the soul, are perforce in the opposite camp. We say that, at all costs, we must start from the inner world; that is the world for the reality of which we stake our lives, to hold to its reality is our primal, our ineradicable necessity. And this necessity is on us, not through blind and wilful egotism, not through any instinctive caprice, but on the very strongest grounds that reason can give us. For this inner world, this world of feeling, of will, and of love, of hope, and of religion, is one of which we are not merely outside spectators, as we are of that vast sum of things which we gaze on as it rolls past us. It is that outer world, we say, which is indeed a world of appearances outside the direct control of our critical experience; but this inner world, it is no mysterious, unknown, untravelled land; nay, it is a life of which we ourselves are part and parcel. We are inside it, we are within the secret sources whence it springs, we see and know how it is done, how it is brought about, we are ourselves concerned with its making, its mechanism, we are fellow-labourers, in our

degree, with God, in its building, our will puts out its own little measure of force into the acts which occur, and, when the effect follows, to that extent at least we know the causal force by which it is brought to pass. Our impulses, our affections, our energies went out into the work, and we must therefore know something of how it has all happened; we worked the machinery. We know ourselves, we know what we mean when we act, we know why and wherefore it was, we are behind the scenes, and we cannot be mistaken. This inner world is the one world that we, on all reasonable grounds, most certainly understand.

II. And to tell us that we are Agnostic here, that we are ignorant of what we mean by an act of will, that we are shut off by our intellectual conditions from having intelligible knowledge of our own selves—why, this is mere midsummer madness! This is to deny our own wits, it is to ask us to repudiate the one thing that we do know with the highest certainty, our own existence; and it is to ask us to do it on the ground of a knowledge which confessedly starts from a world outside us, and of the sense of which we can only slowly and partially collect the meaning, a knowledge that professes itself ignorant of all the real causes by which that world exists, of all the actual motive powers by which it is worked. Such a demand, we say, stultifies itself. It asks us to surrender what we know best at the dictation of that about which we know least. We know infinitely more what we mean by 'I am,' 'I will,' 'I love,' than we ever can possibly know of what we mean by 'laws of nature'; and it is because I can be sure of this personal existence of mine, that I can also survey that other world out there.

III. Faith is that which, in the face of opposing perplexities, yet holds fast to that which it knows, to that which it has for itself found to be real. Faith, our inward spiritual force, has never the right to yield to the counter-pressure from without. It has its inward experiences, its inward facts, and by these it stands. The only attack that it can dread must come from within. If its inward life showed flaws and cracks then it would be serious, but so long as it is a mere conflict between what it knows to be true within and what it sees happening outside, it has but one course and but one duty, to be loyal to itself; loyal to itself, not in ignoring or denying the facts which perplexed it, but loyal in asserting its own witness to its own facts, loyal in claiming for them objective worth, solid and valid and real. This loyalty to the facts revealed by the inner knowledge as against that outer knowledge of the world itself in the cases where they collide may show itself in many points. Let us take two.

1. First in the possibility of spiritual change or conversion. Here the contrast is so sharp! I know nothing which so immediately

follows on a general survey of men in the mass than a conviction that what they are now that they will remain, that there is no power that can alter their nature, character, type, and habit. We all, perhaps, know it in its most deadening form in our survey of the vast heathen world; above all, travelling among men of another faith. Looking on at them as upon interesting specimens, watching their age-long habits and immemorial religious rites, the great shadow of an immense depression falls upon the soul. It all looks so firmly rooted, so ingrained, so natural, that the very idea that this huge and ancient system of theirs could ever pass, or break, or disappear, becomes absurd. The eyes as they range about can see no sign of the inward forces from which such an upheaval could come, everything looks rooted, fixed, necessitated; as it has been so it will be; those black people are what they are, and that they must remain. To begin to talk to them of our Christian faith, to conceive of them sitting in rows in churches like ourselves, is simply ludicrous. So the traveller who passes by must feel as he passes by. He cannot help it, only he need not hurry home to tell us this as a new revelation. It merely means that he is a traveller, and has looked only at the outside of things, and has never got inside at all. That is the largest and most obvious instance. But the same effect is continually taking place in all our surveys of the classes and the masses into which man, looked at from the outside, divides himself. In hoping for a change in them, we can get as far as imagining a change of outward conditions, and with this we imagine might begin a bettering of the inward life. But then, this road of hope, of changing the conditions, is always disappointing us, and we gradually learn that the outward conditions cannot be changed unless the inward life is bettered also, and then we lapse back into despair. How is the inward character ever to become other than what it is, how can we expect greater moral control or higher wisdom in the lowest grades of men? Always, we say, there must be that wretched overplus of population which will sink to the bottom, do what we may, by its own moral weakness, always thriftless, indigent, idle, drunken. And so there settles down on many a soul this black cloud, a sense of the hopelessness of a change in that misery, that degradation which our cities seem to create of themselves by some horrible necessity. Now, in face of that despair, it is our first duty to hold fast by the verities of the spiritual world which we know from within. From within, where the soul knows itself, it knows perfectly well the powers that can work the spiritual change. My soul knows what that means, I in myself recognise the call that is sounding, 'Be converted, be healed'; I know the power of the voice that cries, 'Come to Me, I will take away your heart of stone, I will give you a heart of flesh.

It has been a fact with us, or it could be, and we know it, and so far as it has not been it is we who have failed it, who have fought against, and resisted it, and grown deaf, and silent, and faint-hearted. But the possibility is very real; clouds upon clouds, too, of living witnesses encompass us round about when we doubt it of ourselves, and all of them cry with one voice, 'We knew it, we found it so, we were snatched out of an old and base life into new clean ways of holiness and peace; we had our robes washed, we were foul, we became white as snow—we are here to prove it, to bear witness that we are this, and that we are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, by the mighty power of God.' From within the soul we all know this, we respond; and the demand is that we should be loyal to that undying hope for others when the outer survey of men cows us with its dreadful impotence, loyal to this inner conviction: man can by God's inward operating be made free from all that he is; through the name of Jesus Christ he can be changed.

2. And there is one great instance at last, the instance of death. The outward survey of death and its doings—can anything be more daunting and more disheartening? Death, as we gaze out on it, seems wholly victorious, it appears utterly to close the story of man's life.

But from within, looking on death from out of the eyes of this inner life which we really know, why, no one could ever bring himself to believe that he would ever possibly come to an end at death; in spite of all the daily, hourly news of death's doings over the whole earth, one's own death seems as inconceivable as ever. The preacher parades the overwhelming evidence, he reminds us that it is the one certain thing that happens to us: 'You will be there carried out, over you the handful of dust will be thrown.' Yes, we cannot deny it, but yet he does not persuade us; does any one of us believe it?—believe it not with the forced assent of the intellect only, but with the heart and imagination and conviction? It is in vain. Till it actually is there knocking at the door, till its first slow symptoms begin to give positive warning, we cannot take it, the imagination refuses it, the whole man repudiates it; we try to lay hold of it, we say over and over again to ourselves: 'I must die, the end will come,' but no, it eludes us, it is impossible. The preacher may complain of us, but ought he to complain? Is not this imaginative impossibility of accepting it just the clearest evidence of what we are? Being what we are, what we know ourselves to be, it is simply silly to suppose we come to an end at death; to suppose it is to be in direct collision with our reason and our imagination, not for selfish reasons, not because we desire some future happiness, not for that, but purely and simply because the

idea is so radically inconsistent with our inward character, that it cannot adapt itself to it, cannot be harmonised with it; it is intolerable, nothing can conceivably make death look like a rational and consistent end of life. But death cannot be an end, can only be an incident. 'Death,' said Robert Browning just before he died, 'it is the idle, cowardly carping on death that I so dislike. For my part I deny death as the end of life. Never say of me that I am dead.' So he spoke at the close of all the long, long years, still delivering his unfaltering witness. So we, too, might speak, however long the years before us; we, too, might speak if we would be loyal to this inward verdict, and, so speaking, we might then know how and why it was that Jesus Christ was raised the third day from the dead, might see that open door through which He passed and ascended into heaven.

CANON SCOTT HOLLAND.

The Gifts of Ascensiontide.

Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. PSALM CXLV. 13.

I HAVE read somewhere in a book of Eastern travels that among the Mohammedans of Damascus there is a tradition that as the Ascension of Jesus into heaven took place on the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem, so His descent at the last day to judge the world will be on a mountain at Damascus. In honour of the legend one of the minarets of the great mosque there is called, 'The Tower of Jesus.' And as every prayer offered within those walls is thought by the Mohammedans to be sure of answer, for many a long year they have rigidly excluded every Christian believer from the mosque. But the mosque was once a Christian Church, one of the earliest of Christian Churches. And above its great entrance gate the follower of Christ, who to-day may not cross its threshold, may still read words inscribed there in imperishable mosaic by its Christian builders in the fourth century. They are the words which I have just read to you from the One hundred and forty-fifth Psalm with the addition of one word, that of the holy name. 'Thy Kingdom, O Jesus, is a Kingdom from all the ages.'

I. That is the song of triumph which the church of the Imperial Christ demands from each one of His followers at this season. 'Thy Kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting Kingdom.' That is the word which we have met together to-night, on this Sunday after Ascension Day, to say into the ear of God and of each other. We stand, you and I, not outside the gate only, I trust, offering a mere nominal reverence, a mere conventional worship to the holy name. We are

privileged to enter within the courts of prayer and praise, to join in adoration of the Incarnate Lord, who, as at this time when He had made purification for our sins, ascended into the heavens and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. For at Ascensiontide we are taught to think of a great triumph and a great blessing. A great triumph, for the doctrine of the Ascension of Jesus speaks to us of the dispensation of the fulness of the times in which Christ is to sum up all things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, and be 'far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the ages to come.' And also a great blessing; for the doctrine of the Ascension of Jesus speaks also of the gifts of benediction which He has promised to bestow upon each one of His true followers. 'For unto each one of us is grace given, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, that we may all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

II. The triumph and the blessing; let us think of it. Think of the hope of the world represented by a little group of men at dawn of day on a hill-top gazing up into heaven. Yet it is a fact of the very simplest kind that the whole world has changed, has become practically a new creation since that hour of the Ascension, and because of that hour. The conquering spirit of love is running through the ages. Christ has ascended up on high and sat down at the right hand of God. Yes, but the right hand of God, where is that? The old Christian Fathers spoke true that the right hand of God is everywhere. The kingdom of Christ is an everlasting kingdom. The reign of Christ is throughout all the ages and through all the realms. The supremacy He claims is universal. 'All things that the Father hath are Mine.' There is no limitation. All history, all science, all poetry, all art, all music, all politics, all philosophy, all truth in whatever realm of human thought or action it may be. The Christ of Christ's own teaching is a much wider Christ than the Christ of our imagining. The ascended Christ still giveth gifts unto men, Apostles, prophets, saints, evangelists, pastors, teachers. He spoke by the prophets of old, He speaks by the prophets now. All heaven and earth are vocal with this imperial song of praise, 'Give unto Christ, O ye sons of the mighty, give unto Christ glory and strength. Worship the Christ in the beauty of holiness.'

III. But there is another aspect of Ascensiontide. It teaches us to think not only of the great triumph of our King but it also teaches us of a great blessing. When He ascended on high and led captivity captive, He gave gifts unto men. The image of the Psalmist is evidently taken from the circumstances of an Egyptian general's

triumph, the victorious army with the captive enemy following in its train. The literal allusion of giving gifts to men is probably to the largesse scattered among the city crowd from the spoils of the army. But the gifts which the imperial Christ scatters among His followers are the gifts of the Holy Spirit which He promised to send. 'It shall come to pass, in the last days, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.'

What do we know of these Ascensiontide gifts, of prophecy, of visions, of dreams? Can God take our lives and make the facts of our life prophesy, open for our fellows His great secrets? Can God make our visions His visions, our dreams His dreams?

But we must not only dream, we must work for the Kingdom of God on earth as well as dream about it or see ideal visions of the coming time. You are but taking God's name in vain when you pray daily 'Thy Kingdom come on earth,' and yet do no simple stroke of work to bring that Kingdom nearer. And if you ask me where you are to begin, I will not answer you in other words than these: As you save, so shall you be saved. No man can work out his own salvation otherwise than by working for the salvation of others.

DEAN STUBBS.

The Spirit of Truth.

When He, the Spirit of truth, is come. S. John xvi. 13.

THIS Sunday being in the Octave of the Ascension, was 'Dominicâ post Ascensionem, Dominica Expectationis,' or 'in rosis,' *i.e.* Rose Sunday; the latter name being derived from a legend that, when one of the Popes was preaching on the descent of the Holy Ghost, in the Church of S. Maria Rotunda, in Rome, during the services of this Sunday, a shower of roses suddenly fell from the roof by miracle.

I. Why is the Holy Spirit here called the 'Spirit of Truth?'

1. Because He is the Spirit of the Son, that is, He proceeds from the Son, to whom belongs properly wisdom and truth, as in S. John xiv. 6, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'

2. He is called the Spirit of Truth, *i.e.* most true and exalted Spirit; as opposed to an angel, to the soul, and to wind, who are likewise spirit, by analogy and, as it were, participation; since the Holy Spirit is by essence purest and most powerful Spirit.

3. Because He is worthy of faith.

4. Because He is the author of all truth, and the only teacher and bestower of truth pure and complete, who teaches us all truths necessary to salvation, and frees us from all errors.

5. The Spirit of Truth also is opposed to the evil spirit, the spirit of the world, who is deceived and is deceiving.

II. The great importance of truth.

God Himself is truth, who is the fount of life and the essential foundation (of things), and of wisdom. For this is that unchangeable truth which is rightly called the law of all arts, and the art of the Almighty Artificer (of the world). . . . Incomparably fairer is truth to Christians than was Helen to the Greeks. For on behalf of truth our heroes have combated far more bravely against this Sodom (the world), than, on behalf of Helen, those heroes against Troy.

III. Various definitions of truth.

Truth is the highest good.

Truth is the faculty which brings to light hidden things.

Truth is the strongest of all things.

Strong is the king, strong is wine, strong are women, but above all things truth beareth away the victory.

It is related of S. Augustine, that he had an extreme horror of all untruthful and uncharitable conversation. To prevent any discourse of this nature from being held in his presence, he caused the following inscription to be painted in large letters upon the walls of the room where he usually entertained his friends.

> 'Slanderer, beware, this is no place for thee:
> Here nought shall reign but truth and charity.'

It happened one day that some of his guests began to speak in his presence of the faults of an absent person. The bishop, with a grave and severe look, immediately reproved them, saying, 'My friends, you must either cease to speak in this manner, or it will be necessary for me to have those verses blotted out from the walls of my room.'

S. J. EALES.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Doctrine of Heaven. S. John xiv.

The doctrine of heaven was not intelligible to believing hearts until the disciples were forced to learn experimentally that the earthly world was no longer a resting-place for the Lord and for them; that they were cast out of the world.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The things in Heaven and Earth.

Eph. i. 3, 10.

Both the spheres of heaven and earth have become places of sin (ii. 2; vi. 12); indeed, heaven was the first theatre of sin, when a part of the angels fell into sin from God (1 Tim. iii. 6; 1 S. John iii. 8; S. Jas. ii. 19; 2 S. Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6); thence it came to earth (2 Cor. xi. 3), in even greater dimensions (1 Cor. x. 20, 21). Thus the state originally appointed by God, and the development He wished to be without disturbance, ceased (Rom. viii. 18-24), so that a renewing of the heavens and of the earth was taken into view (2 S. Pet. iii. 13). The centre of this renewal is Christ and His redeeming work (Col. i. 20), which, however, has its development also, as before His appearance up to the 'fulness of times,' so afterwards up to His second Advent, when the 'restitution of all things' (Acts iii. 21), the palingenesia (S. Matt. xix. 28), will be introduced. Cf. 2 S. Pet. iii. 10-13.

Heaven our Home.

S. John xiv.

Three sayings, inculcating faith in the heavenly home:

1. The saying addressed to Thomas;
2. The saying addressed to Philip;
3. The saying addressed to Judas Lebbæus.

Or, our heavenly home is sure to us—

1. In spite of the contradiction of an outward reality full of distress and death.

2. In spite of the want of phenomena evident to the senses. 'I know nothing against Christianity except its want of evidence.'

3. In spite of the denial of the hostile world, which, even by its hate, as a germ and sign of hell, must testify of love, as the seed and sign of heaven.

Names Written in Heaven.

They that are written in the eternal leaves of heaven, shall never be wrapt in the cloudy sheets of darkness. A man may have his name written in the Chronicles, yet lost; written in durable marble, yet perish; written on a monument equal to a Colossus, yet be ignominious; written on the hospital gates, yet go to hell; written on his own house, yet another come to possess it. All these are but writings on the dust or in the waters, where the characters perish as soon as they are made. They no more prove a man happy than the fool could prove Pontius Pilate a saint, because his name was written in the Creed. But they that are written in heaven are sure to inherit it.

Heaven a Place.

S. John xiv. 2.

It is certain that there must be some place in the upper worlds where the beauties and wonders of God's works are illuminated to the highest transparency by His power and holy majesty; where the combination of lovely manifestations,

as seen from radiant summits, the enraptured gaze into the quiet valleys of universal creation, and the streams of light which flow through them, must nerve the spirits of the blest in the mightiest manner, to cry out, 'Holy! holy! holy!' And there is the holiest place in the great temple! It is there, because there divine manifestations fill all spirits with a feeling of His holiness. But still rather, because there He reveals Himself through the holiest one of all, even Jesus Himself.

Preparation for Heaven.

1. Jesus is now going thither. 2. The Jews, as Jews, can never come thither. 3. The disciples cannot now come thither. A decided indication of our need to ripen for heaven by a Christian life. Heaven is to be gained by a ladder, not by a leap; step by step, not by a bound.

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